

How to train your dragon?

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Summary: Everyone told Kagome, her too caring heart would bring her problems. And you know what? They were right! Now does anyone know how to train a baby dragon? [On-going]

1. Chapter 1

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CHAPTER 1

'What a wonderful day' thought Kagome as the huge dragon carried her away. She looked down at the moving earth, then up to her kidnapper. He was flying fast. She could only hope Inuyasha would be able to run as fast, or she'll become dragon's dinner.

The girl huffed. To think few days ago, she complained about being attacked because of the Shikon shards. Well, she got what she wanted. The dragon didn't have Shikon shards on its mind.

Kagome sighed. Fate had very twisted sense of humor.

She looked up at her kidnapper. "You're taking me so far. Why don't you let me go and hunt something there? It would be less troublesome!"

The dragon looked down at her and roared.

She couldn't understand dragon's language, but Kagome was sure, that it said no. Giving up for a moment, she slumped in his claws, doing her best just to shield her face from the wind. In the distance, she could see the outline of the mountains. She suspected it was their destination.

The miko shivered. As much as she wanted to feel earth under her feet, she didn't want to get to the lair where she will be eaten. 'What a drama,' she thought.

The dragon speeded lowering its trajectory. It slid into a mist, navigating between the rocks. Meanwhile, Kagome prayed it didn't make mistake. If she had to die, she didn't want to end as a wet spot on a rock.

Out of blue, the dragon dived then opened his claws. With a scream Kagome fell down, right on the ledge. Even though, the landing was hard, and the miko was sure her right side would be bruised for a month, she was happy. She lived, that's all what mattered. Now she had to focus on maintaining this status.

However, before she could form any plan, the dragon landed right before her.

The girl had short fit of hysterics laughter.

The giant reptile watched her, cocking its head. When she managed to stop, it poked her stomach pushing her few feet away.

"No, no, wait, wait a minute," said the miko, jumping to her feet.
"Look I'm not tastyâ€| and-andâ€|"

The dragon roared, pushing her again. Kagome stood up, only to be pushed again.

"Okay I have enough!" she said, poking the giant head that was getting closer to her stomach. The dragon stepped back watching how the girl stood on her legs.

Kagome glared at the reptile. "I have enough do you hear me?"

The dragon snorted, then poked Kagome's arms and ignoring her protesting turned her around.

"Oh!" she said noticing entrance to the cave. "You want me to go inside?"

The dragon nudged her forward. Not quite willing, but glad she wasn't consumed so far, the young woman walked to the cave. She stopped at the entrance, looking around. Sensing the dragon was getting impatient, she turned to it.

"Give me a second, I have to adjust to the darkness." She stood there a bit longer, before walking inside. She was surprised to see cave's size and that it wasn't as dark as she thought it would be.

When she was five feet from the entrance, the dragon rushed past her as if ignoring her presence. The miko wanted to take this chance and escape, but the dragon's long tail caught her. It curled around her body, drugging her deeper inside. The miko growled in frustration.

The sound died however, when she was pushed right before her captor's head. Cold chill ran down her back, when she saw her mirror image in the creature's golden eyes.

"I wasn't trying to escape," she said.

The dragon snorted.

"Fine, I was. Can't blame me for trying to stay alive."

The dragon shook its head, putting the girl down. For a moment, the reptile watched her, then its head turned to the side, its tail disappeared in some dark corner, to come back holding blue egg.

Kagome shuddered. "You're not trying to tell me, you're going to make scrabbled egg with me as a beacon?"

The dragon shook his head, before nuzzling the egg.

"Oh!" the miko said, "it's yours! You're mommy."

The creature nodded, before pushing the egg in her hands. Kagome took it, making sure it wouldn't slip from her hands.

"Wow. It's amazing," she said, caressing its shell. The miko sighed, looking back at the reptile. "It's nice you showed me this, but can you take me back now?" Kagome asked, trying to return the egg.

The dragon shook her head, pushing the egg back in her hands. The miko became confused.

"You want me to hold it? Why?"

At this moment, Kagome heard loud growl from outside. It vibrated inside the cave, sending another cold chills down her spin. She took a step back, drawing the egg close to her chest. She didn't want to meet with whatever was outside. The dragoness seemed to share her opinion. The reptile seemed to bristle, her golden eyes ran from one side to another.

The roar sounded again, this time closer. A shadow fell on the entrance. The dragoness stepped forward, blocking the miko and an egg from the sight. Another roar, followed by the sound of steps. Something was coming. Something huge.

Kagome closed her eyes. She didn't want to know what was it, but curiosity took hold of her, and she peeked from behind the dragoness. Oh God. Now she wished she hasn't done that.

In the entrance stood black dragon with red eyes, his head was surrounded by sharp-looking horns. This dragon was here to kill. Kagome wanted to melt into the wall.

The dragon growled before breaking into ran. The dragoness met him half way, crushing against his throat. The dragon howled, bending down and biting her neck. His teeth sank deep into her skin. Then he threw her on the wall.

The dragoness collapsed. Her attacker jumped to her, trying to strike her, but she was faster. Her tail hit his jaw, and his teeth slipped over the scales. She jumped up, attacking with her tail again and pushing him on the wall.

The impact was so strong the ceiling started to shake, rocks fell on the fighting dragons. One of them hit Kagome's shoulder. She bit her lip, not wanting to draw attention of the fighting creatures. She knew she had to get out of the cave. Now.

Step by step, she started her slow travel to the entrance. It wasn't so easy carrying large egg, but the miko refused to leave without it. She felt it took years to get out. Then she ran to the edge of the ledge. There was no way she would be able to get down with the egg.

Sudden silence caught Kagome's attention. Something happened inside. She didn't feel it would be a good idea to check what.

Her heart beat fast. The woman looked from side to side, trying to find any way to escape. 'Oh god, oh god, oh god,' she chanted in her head.

An eerie sound came from the cave, followed by sound of steps. Kagome started to pray for help.

To her relief, the dragoness came out. But she didn't look like someone who just won. If possible, she looked even more frightened. Kagome knew it wasn't over.

A roar came from the cave. Hearing it dragoness, caught miko in her claws, flying from the ledge. The girl focused on holding the egg. She heard swishing behind them. The dragon must have started the chase. 'I wish Inuyasha was here,' thought Kagome in despair.

If only she was a better miko, maybe then she would be able to help the dragoness. Her thoughts were cut when she was dropped on yet another ledge. The girl landed on her back, hissing in pain. She looked at the egg, which by some miracle managed to remain whole.

The dragoness hung over them for a moment, before flying straight up. It took two seconds before another dark shape followed her. Both dragons flew into a mist, disappearing from the sight.

Kagome stood below trying to decipher changing shadows. With beating heart, she waited for the outcome. Smell of burning hit her nose. In last possible moment, the girl ran away taking the egg with her. The column of fire hit the place she stood seconds before.

The girl hid behind some boulder, praying to survive and see the next day.

Loud screech filled the mountains. The rocky walls shook with its intensity. Kagome peeked to see one of the dragons falling into a precipice. She wasn't sure which one was that. Another body fell down, landing on the edge of the boulder.

Leaving the precious egg under safety of the rock, she ran to the fallen reptile. Golden eyes looked at her. The miko sighed in relief. It was the mother.

"You're okay," she said, patting its head. The dragoness whined, moving a wing from her body. Kagome gasped in shock. Her body was ripped apart, it was a miracle she was still breathing.

The dragoness whined again, looking at the rock Kagome was hiding before. The girl ran there bringing egg with her.

"It's okay," the miko said her, "you protected it."

The reptile nuzzled the egg. Kagome could see mist gathering in her eyes. The creature pushed the egg back into the girl's hand. She felt tears gathering in her eyes.

"I'll protect it," she promised.

The dragoness growled. Her eyes closed. She let the breath out. Her head fell on the ground. She died.

Clutching blue egg to her chest, the young miko cried over the fallen mother.

That's how her friends found her few hours later.

"Kagome! Get away from that monster," yelled Inuyasha drawing his beloved sword.

"Sit," said the miko, not even looking up. The hanyou hit the ground with a loud thud. Others shook their head at the boy before walking to their silent friend.

"Kagome," said Sango, "are you okay?"

The miko shook her head, before looking up. "She died to protect her baby."

The slayer looked at the dead body, then back at her friend. "Is that her egg?"

Kagome sighed. "Yes. She took me because of it. It's strange, you know as if she knew she would die." The miko brushed her tears away. "At least before the end she knew I would take care of her child."

"We're not taking that thing!" yelled Inuyasha who managed to scramble from the ground.

Miroku sighed. "I have to agree with Inuyasha, we can't take that egg with us."

Kagome looked at them with despair. "You're not serious, we can't leave it here. We can as well destroy it."

Sango patted her friend. "I know, but it's a dragon. They're different from any other species. We shouldn't interfere in their world. You have to leave the egg here Kagome. I'm sorry."

"Why not?" cried Shippou who ran to the young miko and was clinging to the egg.

Inuyasha huffed. "You're too young to understand."

"But I promised her!" cried Kagome.

"No."

The girl started to cry. Sango raised her friend while Miroku took the egg away, leaving it in the shadow.

"Don't cry Kagome. There's big possibility the dragon will live."

Shippou jumped in the miko's arms. She hugged him, kissing his cheek, whispering something into his ear. Inuyasha sighed.

"Come, its getting dark."

The group left leaving the blue egg behind.

Two days later they left the last mountains miles away. For time to time, Kagome kept on looking back. Every time her blue eyes became sad. Sango sighed.

"I know how you feel Kagome," she said patting her friend, "but it's laws of the nature."

"I understand. I'll be fine Sango. Really."

The brown-haired woman smiled, before joining her fiancÃ©e. They got into conversation, form time to time interrupted by Inuyasha's remarks. Shippou crawled on the miko's shoulder.

"You really okay Kagome?"

"Yes. Thank you for help."

The little fox smiled patting the yellow backpack the girl was carrying. Kagome smiled.

"Be careful. It might be delicate."

The boy giggled. "I can't wait to see how the dragon will look like."

"Me too. I'm just worried how others will react," she said looking at the rest.

They turned to look at her.

"Are you coming?" said Inuyasha.

The girl smiled, joining the group. The blue egg was in her bag, and for now her secret was safe. For now, she wouldn't worry.

2. Chapter 2

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CHAPTER 2

Kagome knew hiding egg from her friends wouldn't be easy. However,

she never thought it would be so hard.

For once, after almost two years, searching for ramen in her backpack was a habit for Inuyasha. It took most of her energy just to keep him away from it. After one accident when he almost found out the egg, Kagome decided it was too risky to leave it even for a moment. From then, either she or Shippou watched over the bag, much to Inuyasha's annoyance.

Another problem was the egg itself. In the first week, it rested with her things. On the next week, it started to get warm. Very warm. It was like carrying mini heater. To make this situation worse, she couldn't ask anyone for help. Who wouldn't notice how hot her bag was?

It was luck that it was beginning of the spring.

However, the problem remained. Something was happening with the egg, and neither she nor Shippou knew if it was good or bad. They needed help, but they couldn't ask anyone straightforward.

It was Shippou who came up with a solution.

In the evening when the group gathered near the fire, Shippou was playing with his crayons. Kagome sat near, pretending to write in her notebook, waiting for his sign. The boy finished his picture and ran to the miko.

"Look, it's a dragon!" the boy said.

"It's very pretty. Like always."

The fox lowered his head.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

"Do you think that this little dragon survived?" said Shippou, looking so sad it would break Kagome's heart if she didn't know the egg was resting in her backpack.

"I don't know. I never met a dragon, well, until coming here," said the girl, playing along, "you should ask Sango."

The slayer looked up hearing her name. "What is it?" she asked.

The red-haired boy ran to her, sitting on her lap. "Sango, what happened with the egg we left in the mountains? Do you think the dragon survived?" he asked.

The slayer smiled, looking a bit uncomfortable. "Yes, I think it survived."

"Do you think the egg already broke?" Shippou asked much to the woman's uneasiness. While Sango considered her answer, Miroku decided to join the conversation.

"Why do you want to know?" he said.

Kagome paled hearing his question. She was glad she was sitting so far from the rest, or they might notice that something wasn't right.

It could be her imagination, but she could swear there was accusing edge in the monk's voice.

It was a good thing Shippou was master of deception. He blinked, his eyes got wider. His face pictured nothing but childish innocence.
"I'm just curious," said the fox.

Sango smiled, patting his head. "Well, Shippou, I'm not sure. Kagome you were holding it. Was the egg warm?"

"No."

The slayer thought about it for a moment. "Well, then Shippou the first thing, the egg would become warm. Then after two weeks, a little dragon will be born."

Shippou bit his lip. "But his mommy is dead, will he be able to feed himself?"

The brown-haired woman didn't hide her sadness. "I don't know," she said, trying to be as delicate as possible. "We know very little about the dragons. They're rare, mysterious and very powerful species."

The monk decided to join the two again. "There's a legend that says the dragons are as powerful as youkai lords, but decided to remain in their animal form for the sake of harmony. I heard that sometimes youkai form special bond with the dragons. They're almost like twins. However, I never witnessed it."

Shippou gazed at him with wide eyes. Kagome couldn't blame him. She couldn't help but wonder. If dragons were so powerful, then why she was the one abducted? She wasn't as powerful as youkai; she was sure of it.

If what Miroku said was right, then choosing Inuyasha was a better choice. Even Shippou, he was young, but the miko was sure that soon he'll grow up both in strength and high.

The girl was so focused on her thoughts she didn't notice Inuyasha who walked behind her, trying to see what she was writing. Unable to do so, he sat right behind her.

"Kagome watcha doing?" he said.

Kagome screamed, dropping her notebook. "Inuyasha you surprised me!" she said, grabbing her notebook before the hanyou could get hold of it. He didn't notice, focusing on her face that turned a little red.

He shrugged. "Not my fault you don't pay attention. What are you doing?"

Kagome smiled, hiding the notebook in her bag. "Nothing important Inuyasha," she said, winking at him. The boy shrugged, before joining others. Kagome smiled, following him. From time to time, her eyes ran to the side.

"We would gather wood then," said Kagome, the next day when the group decided to settle for the night.

Shippou jumped on her shoulder.

Inuyasha sighed. "Fine just don't go too far," he said.

The girl winked. "Don't worry Inuyasha, I'll be back soon." Talking and laughing the pair went into forest, unaware of the intense gaze that followed them, for a moment.

When they went to some meadow, Kagome looked at her friend.

"Are you sure Inuyasha won't hear us Shippou?" she said.

Shippou was silent for a moment, listening to the surrounding, before nodding. "Yeah. Kagome, what will we do?" he said, looking at the blue egg inside the backpack.

The miko sighed taking the bag off and touching the egg that rested inside. "I don't know. We have only one week left. If we don't figure out what to do, we would have to tell others. I'm sure they wouldn't be happy knowing I didn't listen to them."

Both the fox and the girl watched the egg with worry. Neither of them was willing to tell about its existence, to the people who wanted to leave it in the mountains. On the other side, they couldn't risk its life, because of their own fear of scolding.

"Maybe we can ask some miko, if we come near the village," said Shippou.

"Good idea," Kagome said, smiling. She put her clothes on the egg, before closing the bag and putting it on her shoulders. She looked at the boy. "Now let's go, or Inuyasha will come searching for us."

They walked back, gathering the wood as promised. The evening was warm and quiet. The nature was waking up to live, from every side surrounded them green buds. Kagome took a deep breath of air. Even there she could smell that sweet scent of spring. On such evening, it was difficult to believe anything bad could happen.

Loud crush shook the entire forest.

Shippou dropped his wood, looking with panic at the miko. "It's from the camp!"

"Let's go, they might need help!" Kagome said, abandoning the rest of the firewood.

The boy jumped on her shoulder, and she ran through the forest, praying her friends were all right. Out of breath, she burst out of the forest.

"Inuyasha what'sâ€ oh, I see."

The tension left the girl's body, when she noticed Inuyasha's older brother standing on the other side of the camp. As always, the siblings were exchanging welcoming insults while clashing their swords.

Not impressed Kagome turned to the rest of the group. "So who started it this time?"

"Inuyasha attacked before Sesshoumaru had time to offend him," said Miroku.

"I see."

The monk smiled, leaning on the tree and closing his eyes in meditation. Sango was on his other side, playing with Kirara. Kagome looked over the fighting brothers. As always, Sesshoumaru looked regal, even when he punched Inuyasha around.

She shrugged at them, looking on the other side. Jaken stood near the trees, behaving like a crazy cheerleader every time the daiyoukai attacked. Next to him stood two-headed dragon, on which was sittingâ€¦

Wait, two-headed dragon? Kagome almost screamed in excitement. Why didn't she think about it before? Sesshoumaru HAS a dragon!

"Oh my God!" she said.

So deep in her own thoughts she didn't notice what was going between the brothers. Right in this moment, Inuyasha attacked, his sword raised above his head, to cut his brother in half. Sesshoumaru stood still until the last moment. He ducked the sword's attack, cutting Inuyasha's hand. The hanyou growled in pain; his hold on the sword lessened.

Taking advantage of this Sesshoumaru attacked from below. The strike was so hard Inuyasha released the sword. It landed ten feet away on the ground. The younger brother decided to fight with his fist. Sesshoumaru ducked his first attack. Then he punched Inuyasha in the jaw. The boy landed with his face in the dirt.

The daiyoukai put leg on the boy's back. "Inuyasha you fight like a child."

The boy cursed, trying to wriggle away. "You asshole! What the hell you want?" he said.

Sesshoumaru seemed to shake his head. "I was merely inspecting my lands half-breed. I'm making sure you won't cross my border."

"I'll go wherever I won't! You can't stop me!"

"Are you willing to test it?" the daiyoukai said.

"Fine! Get ready to die," said Inuyasha clawing the ground.

Sesshoumaru sighed, letting his younger brother stand up. As expected Inuyasha ran for his sword and got into a fighting stance.

Sesshoumaru sheathed his weapon, turned and started to walk away.

"Come back here and fight like a man!" hollered the boy. The

daiyoukai didn't even look back. His companions followed him into the woods.

Kagome stood up and walked to her friend. "Inuyasha, stop this," she said, "You really act like a child."

The hanyou turned to the miko, glaring at her. "What did you say?"

The miko shook her head. "Nothing. Let's move to the dinner. I'm hungry."

At the mention of food, hanyou lowered his sword. He looked for a moment on the way his brother went, but then he put the sword back in its sheath. The group had already started the fire. His stomach growled when he noticed awaiting cups of ramen. The miko raised one of them, encouraging him to join the meal.

"Keh!" Inuyasha said, walking to his friends and digging into his cup of noodles.

The evening went on in a pleasant way. After eating two cups of noodles, even Inuyasha was less grumpy about his fight with older brother.

Friends stayed up for long, talking and joking. As time passed, they decided to get some rest. All of them found some spot for the night and curled in their beds, except Miroku who decided to keep watch for the next hours.

Kagome and Shippou laid in their sleeping bag for few hours, waiting until he would have to go to the side. It took some time, but in the end, the monk disappeared in the woods. The miko knew she had to be quick.

She jumped out of the sleeping bag while her little friend transformed and was now looking like her mirror image.

"Make sure no one notice I'm gone, okay?" she said.

The boy nodded. "Good luck Kagome."

The young miko, grabbed her backpack and ran to the woods, where Sango's fire-cat was waiting for her. She petted the giant cat, before jumping on her back.

"Let's go Kirara," she said.

The cat nodded, jumping up and flying over the woods. When they left the camp far enough, Kagome looked at her companion.

"Kirara we need to find Sesshoumaru."

The youkai roared in protest.

"Don't worry," the miko said, patting her head, "I know what I'm doing."

They flew for some time before Kagome noticed a glow of the fire. Kirara started to reduce their high. It was the moment. The girl felt

how her heart increased in speed.

They landed without making a noise. The miko looked around the camp. The dragon slept, curled around the little girl who followed the daiyoukai. The toad youkai snored leaning on the dragon's tail.

Kagome looked around. There was no doubt it was Sesshoumaru's camp, but where was-

"Miko, your presence is unwelcome here."

The girl gasped, backing away from the youkai lord that appeared before her without warning. She gathered her composure as quick as possible, knowing he wouldn't show patience waiting for her answer.

"I know, but I had to come. Sesshoumaru, I-I need your help," she said.

"This Sesshoumaru has no interest in aiding you," he said, walking away.

Kagome wasn't going to give up so fast. She followed. "I suspected that," she said catching up to him, "but it's not about me. It's about a promise I gave a dying mother."

"Your pitiful human affairs haveâ€"

"I never said the mother was human," she cut in, "I gave promise to a dragon."

Sesshoumaru stopped. "What did you say miko?"

"I gave promise to the dying dragon that I'll take care of her baby. That's why I need your help."

The daiyoukai watched her through narrowed eyes. Kagome felt more nervous with every passing second. She didn't know Inuyasha's half brother enough to decipher if he was considering helping her, or killing her. Out of sudden, he turned and started to walk again.

"Leave."

Kagome felt despair settling over her. Sesshoumaru was her only hope. She felt the warmth emitting from her bag. The dragon was going to be born soon, and she had no idea how to feed him, raise, nothing. Nothing!

She looked back at the leaving men. "Wait!" she called, taking the egg out of her bag. "It's already warm, at least tell me how should I feed it!"

To her surprise, Sesshoumaru walked back. She watched him as he came near and touched the blue shell, caressing it with unexpected delicacy.

"You said the truth," he said.

Kagome blushed in anger. "Of course I did. I wouldn't be here if I didn't need your help."

They were silent for a long moment. Kagome was biting her lip, hoping Sesshoumaru would decide to help her. The fact he was still touching the egg was promising at least.

"Very well miko, I'll help you, but you'll do something for me in return," he said.

Kagome almost screamed in joy, but she remembered inuyoukai had sensitive ears. She settled on wide smile. "Sure, I'll do anything!" she said.

Sesshoumaru blinked.

"Well, almostâ€ Just say what is it and I'll tell you if I can do it."

"Hnn."

3. Chapter 3

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CHAPTER 3

Kagome couldn't believe what she heard. It seemed so unreal, and yet the miko doubted she could imagine something like this. Maybe she was just too tired. After all, it would be around one in the morning.

She looked up at the youkai sitting opposite to her.

Okay, he looked real.

"Can you say it again?" she said.

"This Sesshoumaru never repeats himself."

The girl huffed. Of course, he wouldn't do what she asked him to. She needed another tactic.

She crossed her hands. "Forgive me, but it's hard to believe that all you want from me is to tell Rin stories before she goes to bed."

The man arched his eyebrow. "I don't see why. Storytelling is a rare gift between youkai. You miko speak a lot."

Kagome wasn't sure if she should feel offended, but for the sake of their future encounters, she decided it was a compliment. "Well, it would be my pleasure. Rin seems like a really nice girl. Maybe I'll bring Shippou along? You know, that little fox. He likes to listen to the stories."

The man shrugged. "As long as it's not Inuyasha I do not care."

Kagome laughed. "No problem. Inuyasha would kill me if he knew I took that egg and came here asking you for help. I hope you will keep it a secret in return."

"I'll honor my word," said Sesshoumaru standing up. "You should go now miko."

"Right," said the girl. She put the egg back into the bag and woke up Kirara. Before getting on the cat, she looked once more at the daiyoukai. "When will we meet?"

The man looked at the sky. "The full moon is in three days. The dragon would be born on that night. Do any of your companions know about the egg?"

"Well Shippou, and now, also Kirara."

"Bring them with you."

Kagome bit her lip. "Okay, but how will I find you? I don't know where we'll go. And it's obvious I can't ask Inuyasha for help."

The man thought about it for some time. "I'll send Ah-un for you. He'll stand against the wind. Inuyasha won't smell him. Make sure you'll be here right after the moon rise."

"Okay," Kagome said, sitting on Kirara's back. She looked at the stoic man. "Sesshoumaru, thank you."

The daiyoukai turned away from her. "I am not doing this for you miko, but for the dragon."

"Still," she said, "you have my thanks."

With a roar, Kirara flew into the starry sky.

They were about half an hour from their own camp, and Kagome used this time, to think about the newest developments. She was still surprised Sesshoumaru agreed to help her, but it was also a great relief. She just couldn't imagine telling her friends that, in few days, they would become adopted family for the baby dragon.

Kirara meowed signaling they were nearing the camp.

Kagome looked back at her fury friend. "Okay, let's land here. We need to sneak inside."

The cat mewed.

"I know - I have to sneak inside. You can go in whenever you want," the miko said with a smile.

The cat landed in the woods. They walked to the camp making sure they stood against the wind. Kagome peeked from behind the bushes surrounding the camp. She almost cursed noticing Inuyasha had taken over the watch. There was no way he wouldn't notice that she walked to the camp out of nowhere. To make it worse, Shippou was still transformed and looked like her.

On the other hand, she couldn't stay in the bushes for long. It was already miracle Inuyasha didn't spot her. She needed plan. Now.

Kagome dared another peek at a hanyou who was sitting on the bench. Her eyes widened. Inuyasha had closed eyes! That was it! The miracle she needed!

She caught Kirara who was sitting next to her. Bringing the cat next to her lips, she tried to speak in the lowest tone she could manage, praying Inuyasha wouldn't wake up now. When she finished, the cat just nodded, before walking away, to the other side of the camp. Kagome sat in the bush, shaking from the adrenaline coursing in her blood.

In the next minute, the cat jumped up on the tree where Inuyasha was snoring, waking him up. Kagome entered the camp. She jumped over Shippou's still transformed body, blocking him from the hanyou's view.

"Kagome, where the hell were you?" said Inuyasha, jumping off the tree, and coming closer. The miko kicked the sleeping boy who in shock transformed back into his form.

"Inuyasha, what are you talking about?" the girl said, smiling as if nothing happened.

"Where were you?"

"Oh, you mean now? Well, you know, I had to go out for a business. Nature calling and all," she said, pointing at the forest.

The boy blushed, but he got suspicious right away. "You had to go, and I didn't notice this?"

"Can't help it. You were sleeping," Kagome said shrugging.

"I never sleep that hard," the silver-haired boy argued.

"Well, obviously you do. I saw how Kirara woke you up. Now can I go back to sleep?"

Inuyasha didn't look convinced, but just when he was about to give up on accusation, he noticed the bag she put on the ground. His suspicions rose again.

"You went out to pee with this bag? What for?"

Kagome went still for a second before laughing. "It's a girl's stuff Inuyasha. It was easier to take this whole bag with me, than risk searching for the needed things and waking everyone up."

Inuyasha watched her for another two seconds before shrugging. "Fine, just next time wake me up."

The miko smiled. "Don't worry if something scared me, I would have scream so loud you wouldn't be able to miss it."

"Fine, fine."

Kagome watched how the boy jumped back on the tree. She felt guilty for lying to him, but she didn't have choice. She looked at the backpack, where laid the egg. She knew that, at some point, she would have to tell others what she did. She turned back to look at Inuyasha. The boy looked back at her.

"What?"

She wanted to tell him.

She opened her mouth, and then closed them.

It wasn't the right moment.

"Nothing," she whispered, sliding into the sleeping bag. "Good night, Inuyasha."

She fell asleep the second she laid down.

The next day the miko told Shippou about her meeting with the daiyoukai. The little fox was so excited hearing he would be present at dragon's birth he almost screamed. Kagome stopped him in last possible moment. Inuyasha was still suspicious, and Mirokuâ€|

Well, Miroku always knew when she was keeping secrets.

At this moment, the monk looked at her. The miko smiled, but a little blush crept on her cheeks.

Trying to distract herself from worries, the miko focused on the beauty of the day. She loved spring.

"Kagome," Sango said, who was walking next to her, "aren't you cold?"

The miko looked at her slayer friend. "No, why?"

"Well, your cheeks are red, and you're not wearing your coat."

Kagome laughed. "Don't worry, I feel perfect," she said.

Sango frowned. "Are you sure? It wouldn't be good if you catch a cold. Usually in this weather, you wear at least thicker clothes. If you want I can get you something from your bag."

"Yeah Kagome," Inuyasha interjected, "don't think we'll stop our search because you have a running nose."

Kagome didn't like the whole attention gathered on her. She knew she had to say something that would calm everyone and wouldn't provoke more questions. "Look guys, I'm fine. It seems after travelling with you for so long I got stronger. I promise if I feel cold, I'll put something on, okay?"

The trick worked. The conversation took another turn, and the miko breathed a sigh of relief. She slowed down walking few feet behind the group. Shippou joined her, jumping on her shoulder.

"So Kagome want some coat from your bag?" he teased.

Kagome frowned. "Hush. We can't afford troubles right now."

"Sorry. I just can't wait. There are only two days left."

Kagome smiled, but her eyes ran to the side, where her friends were talking.

Two days. After that time, there would be no turning back. After the dragon would come out of the shell, she would have to tell her friends about it. They wouldn't be happy with what she did, but it would be better if they heard it from her.

The miko sighed. She never felt so guilty about doing something that she thought was right.

"Kagome, you okay?" said Shippou, looking at her with worry.

The girl was about to answer, when she felt a chill running down her back. She turned to the group.

"Guys, I think something with a Shikon Jewel is coming to us from the left side."

Her words put in motion the whole group. They readied their weapon, waiting for the upcoming attack.

Kagome smiled and put her bag down. "Shippou, take care of it," she said.

The fox nodded.

The girl took her bow. Just when the youkai burst out of the forest, the miko released the first arrow.

After that attack, the time moved fast for the shards hunters. They were attacked two more times, but only the first attack left them with additional Shikon shard. The girl didn't even have the time to think about the egg in her bag. That was until the night of the full moon.

She and Shippou were very nervous on the evening. Even Kirara seemed eager to leave the camp. There was no way the other three members of the group wouldn't notice it. The blue-eyed miko glanced at the sun. It was already setting. She should leave now, but how could she do it, when everyone were watching her?

Out of sudden, a brilliant idea popped into her head. She stood up and took the bag.

Inuyasha couldn't stop himself. "Where the hell do you think you're going?"

"Inuyasha, look, you're not going to like it, but I have that important test. I have to learn, and I'm sorry, but I wouldn't be able to concentrate in here."

The boy huffed, crossing hands over his chest. "Why the hell not?"

The miko rolled her eyes. "Guess yourself. Shippou, you're going with me?"

The boy jumped on her shoulder, without answering the question. Seeing this Inuyasha's bad mood got even worse. "And why the hell that brat can go with you?"

"Inuyasha sit!"

The hanyou hit the ground.

Kagome huffed. "How many times I told you not to call him that? Shippou can go with me because he understands what it means to be quite. And it's safer to be with him, than on my own."

The miko took her backpack. The sunset was almost over. She had to hurry if she wanted to be on time as Sesshoumaru said her. She turned to Miroku who was sitting under the tree, pretending to meditate.

"Could you guard the Shikon for me while I'm gone?" Kagome asked. When the monk nodded, she threw the bottle containing the shards to him. Miroku tucked it into his robe.

Then he looked at her. "Be sure to understand what you are doing Kagome," he said.

The girl went still, looking back into monk's violet eyes. She had no doubt he wasn't talking about her supposed studying. But was it possible he knew about the egg? How?

She noticed that Inuyasha was getting off the ground and watching her. She couldn't turn back now. She managed to smile. "I'll do my best Miroku," she said.

The monk sighed, leaning back on the tree. Kagome looked at her slayer friend. "Can I take Kirara with me?"

Sango nodded, and the little youkai ran to her.

"Just don't go too far!" called Inuyasha.

Not wanting to lie, Kagome didn't answer.

The trio disappeared in the woods, making sure they were walking against the wind. Sesshoumaru said Ah-un would be waiting somewhere for them. Kagome couldn't help but worry. What if they didn't find the dragon on time?

Much to her relief finding the two-headed dragon wasn't as hard as she thought it would be. Ah-Un waited for them on the near meadow, in the meantime eating the grass. When he noticed the newcomers, he huffed, unhappy to abound the tasty treat.

Kagome patted the reptile's head. "If you like apples I'll give you one when we get to Sesshoumaru, okay?"

One head nodded, but the other one pocked her stomach.

The miko smiled. "Okay, I understand, each of you will get its own

apple. Can you take us to Sesshoumaru now?"

Both heads nodded and allowed the miko and her friends to climb on his back.

I hope my dragon will have only one head, thought Kagome when Ah-Un jumped in the air.

They flew for the next twenty minutes, before landing on the outskirts of the western lands. Sesshoumaru was already waiting for them in the middle of some clearing. His welcome was as cold as always.

"You are late, miko."

The girl wanted to roll her eyes. The brothers were just so alike. She would point it out, but it wasn't the right moment. She jumped off Ah-Un's back, giving the both heads promised treats.

Shippou followed her, hiding behind her legs. Kagome looked around the place. "Where's Rin and Jaken?"

The daiyoukai looked at them for a moment.

"I left them under good care. It's not a place for them. Do you have the egg?" he said.

No, I left it in home. "Yes," Kagome said, trying to hide her annoyance while taking the egg from the bag.

Sesshoumaru nodded. "Good. Now miko, leave the egg here. Under the tree are fresh clothes. Behind those boulders is a small pond. Take the clothes and take a bath."

This time, Kagome couldn't stop her temper. "Excuse me? Are you saying I stink?"

Shippou's hand clenched on her leg, reminding her she was dealing with a dangerous person. It was too late, however, to take the words back.

Sesshoumaru glared at her for a whole minute, before answering. "After the birth, the dragon chooses its guardian by the scent. Your scent is mixed with the scent of your other companions. It can confuse him and make him unable to bond with anyone."

Kagome blushed. "I didn't know. I'm sorry."

"Hnn."

The miko looked at the boy who was still hiding behind her. "What about Shippou, should he take a bath too?"

The daiyoukai looked at the fox. Feeling his gaze Shippou almost collapsed from fear.

"Some foxes are able to erase foreign scents with their magic. Can you do it?" said Sesshoumaru.

Shippou shook his head in negative.

"Then you'll take a bath after the miko. There is some smaller robe prepared for you. Miko, you should go. Remember that after the bath you can't touch each other."

Kagome smiled and without another word did what the daiyoukai told her. Just as he said, under the tree waited some robes. She picked one and went in the direction of the pond. It was small and filled with cold water. The miko washed herself as fast as she could, praying she wouldn't have a cold tomorrow. The worse was washing her hair, but she suspected it was necessary. It was a good thing that it was a warm night.

When she finished, the girl jumped out and put on the robe. It turned out to be from very thick material, and warm enough to stop her teeth from chattering.

She walked back to the meadow and was surprised by its look. In the place where few minutes ago were young grass, now was only a burnt ground. In the middle was lying the egg. She walked closer to Shippou. The boy turned to her with blinding smile.

"Pity you weren't here! The fire was huge! It was a lot of fun!" he said, shaking with excitement.

Kagome gave him unsure smile. "If you say so. Perhaps you should go and take a bath."

"Okay!" the boy said running, to the tree line and taking the robe that waited for him. Kagome watched how he disappeared behind the boulders. With a sigh, she looked at the rising moon.

"Once the moon will be in the zenith the dragon would come out of the shell."

The miko turned around to see the daiyoukai standing behind her. "It sounds like some ritual."

"It is."

"Really?"

The man looked at her with disbelief. "For someone in possession of the dragon egg your knowledge is surprisingly small."

"If I knew anything about dragons I wouldn't ask for your help in the first place."

"Hnn."

Sesshoumaru still looked as if he couldn't believe in her lack of knowledge. Kagome didn't care as long as he was going to tell her what would happen.

Sesshoumaru was silent for a few minutes, before sighing. "It's done with every dragon born in the youkai society. On the day of their birth, they bond with their caretaker. The dragon chose the person basing on their scent and powers."

"How it works?"

"The egg lays in the middle of the circle. Four different youkai stands in the four directions. The dragon goes to the person who's the most powerful and bonds with him."

Kagome frowned. "Youkai? Does it mean dragons don't bond with humans?"

Sesshoumaru didn't reply.

The miko sighed. "I see," she said. "At least I'll be able to witness it. It's something amazing anyway. But there's only three youkai here."

"You'll take part in the ritual. The dragoness chose you in the first place."

Kagome looked back at the moon. Out of sudden, an idea entered her mind. She turned to the daiyoukai. "Do you think it will bond with Shippou?"

"It is possible. The mother could have kidnapped you because she smelt his scent on you."

It seemed to cheer up the miko. "Well, if it happens, I'm sure Shippou would be very happy." She bit her lip. Her tone was serious when she spoke again. "But I'm not stupid, you're the most powerful. The dragon will probably bond with you. You'll take good care of it, right? And you'll let us visit it from time to time?"

"Hnn."

"Okay, I'll take it as yes," the miko said with a smile.

At this moment from behind the boulder ran Shippou, wearing the new green robe. He had the brightest smile on his face. "I'm ready! What do we do now?" he said.

Sesshoumaru looked at the moon. "Hnn. It's a time. Call your fire-cat and we can begin."

"Yay! Kirara did you hear that?!" Shippou called, clapping his hands in excitement. Noticing the cat youkai on the other side of the clearing, he ran to her. Sesshoumaru went in their direction in his usual speed.

Kagome looked at the moon, before following after them. Her smile was only a bit less excited than before.

4. Chapter 4

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CHAPTER 4

The egg laid in the middle of the circle, its blue shell seemed to sparkle in the moonlight.

Kagome looked around from her position on the edge of the burnt ground. Sesshoumaru organized them to stand on the four sides of the world according to the strength of their power.

On south stood Kirara who, as Sesshoumaru said, she was there only to represent weaker youkai. The dragon wouldn't bond with her.

On the east stood Shippou, fidgeting with excitement. The miko was impressed the boy was even able to stay silent for so long.

She stood on the north and Sesshoumaru on the west.

She looked at the daiyoukai. He was the most powerful in their group. She didn't have doubt he was going to be the dragon's caretaker. Well, she had to admit he wasn't that horrible as she thought when she met him for the first time. Still she wasn't sure if it was a good idea to leave a baby dragon in his hands.

On the other hand, Ah-Un looked happy. If Sesshoumaru managed to raise one dragon, he shouldn't have a problem with another one, right? With a little sigh, the miko looked back at the egg. It didn't matter who will take care of the dragon as long as he was safe and in good hands.

She looked at the egg, hearing Shippou's gasp. Her eyes widened.

On the shell was a crack.

The miko felt adrenaline rushing through her. It was happening! Her whole attention focused on the egg. It was one-time life experience. She couldn't miss a single second of it.

The egg moved a bit, and then started to shake. In the next moment, everything calmed down, but those present on the clearing could hear a light knocking. The crack started to get bigger. Small pieces of the shell were falling on the ground. In a matter of seconds, the crack turned into a little hole. Kagome could see something moving inside.

Shippou couldn't hold his excitement any more. "It's a dragon," he whispered, "it's a dragon!"

"Silence," said Sesshoumaru.

The boy bit his lip. It was obvious it took a lot of his strength to maintain self control. Kagome couldn't blame him, she felt just the same.

A loud crack cut the silence and from the egg peeked a dark head. The dragon blinked few times, before opening his golden eyes, looking around with curiosity. He cocked his head to the side, making some growling noise.

Just like Shippou, Kagome bit her lip to hold back a squeal.

The reptile looked around, before hiding back into the egg. In a moment, they heard another crack and the egg broke into two pieces. The dragon kicked one side of it and walked out. He looked over the gathered people, sniffing.

At first, he took steps into Kirara direction, but just as Sesshoumaru predicted, he soon turned away and walked closer to Shippou. The boy tried to stay still, when the little reptile walked closer. Then the dragon turned away and walked where Kagome stood.

He turned from her almost in the same moment. Since she knew it would happen, the miko wasn't that much disappointed. Instead, she watched how the dragon walked to Sesshoumaru.

When the dragon caught the daiyoukai's scent, he started purring. The little reptile moved closer, bouncing on his way.

The daiyoukai knelt on the ground, exchanging his hand. The dragon started to sniff it.

Kagome felt how Sesshoumaru shifted his powers. Soon she noticed little sparks forming on the tips of his claws. The dragon reached for it with his head.

That was it. The moment of the bonding.

The dragon's head and Sesshoumaru's hand were only a breath away.

In the last possible moment, the dragon jumped away.

Kagome gasped, and even Sesshoumaru seemed looked surprised.

When she looked at the reptile, she found that he looked confused himself.

The dragon was blinking, shaking his black head and sneezing. It took him few minutes to calm down. When it happened, he started to sniff again. For the second time, he walked closer to Sesshoumaru, but after few seconds, he shook his head and walked away.

To Kagome's amazement, he walked to her and sat right before her. The woman stared into his golden eyes, unsure what should she do. She looked up at the daiyoukai, hoping for some help.

"Kneel," the man said. After she did that, he continued. "Now, let him sniff your hand. When he stops, introduce him with your power."

Kagome bit her lip. "I'm not sure if I can do that. My powers are quite unstable. I might hurt him."

"Try."

Praying to all merciful gods above, Kagome reached for her inner powers trying to draw a part of them while holding the rest back. She felt a wave of relief when her fingers started to glow with pink light. The dragon touched one of them with his head.

Kagome gasped, feeling as if something was pulled from her soul. In its place fell some foreign power, that she suspected belonged to the reptile. That piece settled in her soul glowing with some light energy. It filled her heart with warmth, and the girl closed her eyes, smiling. Kagome knew she just created a bond with the small,

black dragon. It brought tears of joy to her eyes.

She looked down at the reptile. The dragon purred and jumped on her knees.

The ritual was over.

Hearing steps coming in her direction, Kagome looked up to at the two youkai staring at her.

"I have a dragon!" the girl said with a smile.

Shippou jumped on her shoulder, looking at the animal on her lap. "He's so cool! Look, he has such a small wings! You think he will fly?"

"I'm not sure. What do you think Sesshoumaru?"

"Hnn."

The miko stared at the daiyoukai who stared right back. The girl looked back at her knees. "You said dragons don't bond with humans."

"They don't."

"Then why?"

Sesshoumaru stared at her for a long moment. Kagome lost hope he'll say anything, so she turned to the dragon. She patted its head. The dragon purred like a cat, which cause Shippou to giggle at the sound.

"Hnn. Interesting," out of sudden said Sesshoumaru.

The miko almost asked if that was his way of saying '_I don't know'_, but decided against it. He was helping her, even if he wasn't fond of her; it would be better not to test his patience. It just wasn't worth the risk. Not now, at least. She looked at the little reptile on her lap.

"What now?" Kagome said.

"Boy, under that tree is a sack with fishes. Bring them."

Shippou jumped of Kagome shoulder and ran in the direction pointed by the daiyoukai.

The miko slid her hand over the dragon's black scales. He seemed to like it since he started to purr louder. The girl giggled.

"He is so dark, like a night," she said.

"Hnn. He's a unique mix of two species - mountain dragon and the night dragon."

Kagome looked back at the daiyoukai. "So it's a boy?"

"Yes."

"I should name him," she said.

The dragon looked up staring at her with big golden eyes. She smiled, scratching him under his head. His eyes closed, his head titled to the side, to give her better access to that place. The girl shook her head, scratching him where he wanted. In this moment, Shippou came back with a sack filled with fishes. He bounced on his tiptoes.

"Can I feed him?" he asked.

Kagome was about to answer, when Sesshoumaru did this for her.

"No."

The boy bowed his head, disappointment evident on his face. Kagome shot annoyed glare in the man's direction, sending small dose of her miko powers to spike his youki. He arched his eyebrow, at her micro attack. The miko pointed her head at the boy. Sesshoumaru seemed to understand her message.

"For now the miko is creating the bond with him. Only she can touch or feed him. In a few days, however, you'll be able to do that too."

The miko smiled at the fox. "See? You just have to wait few days."

"Okay!" said the boy, with renewed enthusiasm.

Sesshoumaru nodded, before looking back at the girl. "Now miko, feed him."

Kagome followed his order, picking up small fishes from the sack. The reptile swallowed them in one bite. After fifth fish, he shook his head showing he had enough. The girl laughed patting his head.

"Okay, no more," she said putting the fishes aside. She turned to Sesshoumaru. "How often should I do it?"

"Just once for now - when you come here. He would sleep the whole day, waking him for feeding would be foolish."

The miko looked relieved. "It seems I'll have time to tell my friends about our new companion then. Are you sure, he won't wake up? How's that possible?"

Kagome thought she saw a spark of annoyance going through the man's face, but it disappeared before she could be sure of it. She shrugged at that thought. Sesshoumaru said she should strengthen the bond between her and the dragon, how could she do it without having at least some little information?

The daiyoukai closed his eyes. "For now the dragon is on his last stage of development. It's the way of saving energy. After around four weeks, he would turn into a daylight creature."

"And whatâ€" "

"Miko, enough."

Kagome bit her lip. So she was right, she just managed to annoy the stoic daiyoukai. Inuyasha would be proud of her. She looked back at the little dragon on her lap. Just by looking at him, she could think about other hundreds of questions. She smiled, thinking how Sesshoumaru would look if she told him that.

Giggling, the girl decided to leave that thought for herself. It wouldn't be wise to risk her head over questions she could ask later.

"Okay. Thank you for everything. Is there something I have to know before we meet tomorrow?"

The man shook his head. "No. Tomorrow come earlier. Rin would be waiting. Take the boy with you. It would help the dragon to get acquainted with him."

Shippou who was listening smiled and nodded his thanks. He looked at the moon, before turning to her miko friend. "We should go Kagome, Inuyasha would be angry."

When she didn't reply the boy patted her face. "Kagome?" he called.

The girl shook her head, looking at the little fox. She smiled, trying to erase the worry she noticed on his face. "I'm sorry, I was thinking about the name for the dragon."

Shippou bounced on her shoulder. "Did you choose already? How will you call it? Tell me, please, please!" he begged.

Kagome laughed. "Nero. In Italian it means black."

"Nero? Sounds cool, do you think he will like it?"

They looked at the reptile on the miko's lap. Kagome scrapped his head, and the dragon looked up her, titling his head.

"So," she said, "what do you think? Do you like your name Nero?"

The dragon hummed, laying his head back. The boy smiled. "I think it means yes."

"Or he's tired. It was a hard day for him, getting out of the egg isn't the easiest thing." Kagome looked at the fox on her shoulder. "He needs to rest and so do we. We're going. Sesshoumaru thank you for everything. I don't know what would have happened if you didn't help us."

The man said nothing, but he nodded in her direction. It was enough for her - at least he didn't throw her thanks back in her face, right? She sent Shippou to change his clothes while she put the dragon in her bag.

He looked at her, his golden eyes seemed dazzled. Kagome laughed patting his head. "Now Nero, be a good boy. We are going back to the camp; if Inuyasha sees you, he would cut our heads, so behave, okay?"

The reptile growled, making few circles between the clothes in the bag, before laying down. The girl looked back at the daiyoukai, biting her lip. She knew she already annoyed him with her constant questions, but there was one very important thing left. She tried to look as apologizing as she could manage, before opening her lips.

"Sesshoumaru, last question, how I can cover Nero's scent so Inuyasha wouldn't smell him?"

The daiyoukai huffed. "He's a half-breed; his sense of smell is far too weak to notice a dragon's scent. Do not bother yourself with this."

"Good to know," said Kagome with a smile.

At this moment, Shippou ran back, wearing his usual clothes. The miko left him with the dragon while she changed her own clothes. She still couldn't believe she was able to bond with the dragon, but deep inside she felt it was a good thing. Maybe it was crazy to think that, but Kagome felt as it was meant to happen.

The girl shook her head, before heading back. She was probably over thinking the whole matter. Nero was bond to her, and she should focus on raising him and finding the best way to tell her friends about it.

Shippou waited for her on Kirara's back. She took her bag with already dozing dragon and joined him. She gave Sesshoumaru last look.

"Tomorrow," she said.

The man nodded. "Ah-Un would lead you."

Kagome nodded, patting Kirara's head. With a roar, the fire-cat flew into the night sky, taking her passengers back to their camp.

Before they arrived, Kagome decided they wouldn't sneak inside like the last time. Once was enough, besides she didn't want to lie more than she already did. If she had to, she would tell her friends the truth today, though she hoped she would be able to find some better moment.

Two minutes later Kirara landed beside the clearing, where her friends were sitting beside the fire. Kagome noticed the lack of one of them.

"Where's Inuyasha?" she asked.

Miroku and Sango glanced at each other for a second. The miko sighed, knowing what it meant.

"You don't have to hide it from me, you know? But I'm surprised, I haven't seen Kikyou's soul stealers," Kagome wondered, taking off the bag and putting it on the ground with care. She shrugged. "Whatever. Do you know how long he'll be gone?"

Sango shook her head, sending her friend sad glance. "I'm sorry

Kagome."

The blue-eyed girl shook her head. "Everyone makes their choices Sango."

Deep inside Kagome felt the same mixture of hurt, jealousy and sadness as always, when Inuyasha left her for his previous love. She loved him with all of the passion reserved for the first love, however, day after day she was starting to realize she crossed the point when she couldn't tolerate always being the second one. Maybe Nero showed himself in the right moment, maybe it was a sign it was time to give up.

She smiled at her thoughts. It hurt like hell to think about it, but perhaps it was time to focus on some different matters.

A touch of a small hand cut her from her thoughts. The girl looked down at the fox who stared at her with his green eyes. "Are you okay?" he asked.

Kagome patted his head. "I am Shippou, I really am."

The boy nodded, and moved to the sit by the fire. Meanwhile, Kagome took out her sleeping bag and prepared things for the rest of the night. When she finished her monk friend approached her.

"I suppose it should return to you," he said, handing her the bottle with Shikon shards.

The girl took it, hiding the bottle in her pocket. "Thank you for watching them," she said.

The man nodded. "It was my pleasure. Tell me how went your learning?"

"Good, I think," Kagome said, now sure Miroku knew she was hiding something.

Her friend was silent for a long time as if waiting for the rest of her answer. The miko bit her lip. It seemed like a good moment to tell her friends about everything. She opened her lips andâ€¦

"Kagome?" said Inuyasha, out of sudden landing in the camp. "How long are you here?"

The girl closed her mouth, huffing at hanyou question. Did he have to come so fast? For once when it was needed, couldn't he stay with Kikyou for the rest of the night? She rolled her eyes.

"Long enough Inuyasha, but don't worry, I'm not angry or anything. You don't have to make that guilty face."

"Keh!" said the man, jumping on his selected branch.

Kagome shook her head at his behavior, before glancing back at Miroku. The moment was ruined, and he seemed to know that since he turned back with the intention to go back to his fiancÃ©.

"Miroku," Kagome called him in a whisper.

"Yes?"

"Can I speak with you tomorrow?"

The monk smiled. "Of course, Kagome."

The miko answered with a smile on her own before she too joined her friends by the fire. They talked for a long time, before going to bed.

Shippou snuggled with her, his eyes closed when his head laid down on the pillow. She knew he had a lot of attractions. She patted his head. "Have nice dreams," she said in his pointed ear.

She looked at the yellow bag. 'Good night Nero,' she added in her thoughts before she too fell into a deep sleep.

5. Chapter 5

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CHAPTER 5

Kagome hoped she would be able to talk with Miroku before the noon, however, her hope died in the pile of ashes two hours after sunrise. It seemed all youkai in Japan chose that day to try, and steal her Shikon shards. The group didn't even have ten minutes to catch their breath.

The whole time Kagome was worried that the little dragon sleeping in her bag would wake up, but it seemed Nero was a heavy sleeper. She didn't even feel him move through the day. At some point, she was worried about this, but didn't have time to check on him. Everyone felt relief when everything calmed down, just before the sunrise.

The group soon found some abounded shack and decided to settle there for the night. They were just getting ready for dinner when Inuyasha came back with fishes. He threw it to the girls before sitting down. He sighed, rolling his shoulders.

"Damn, I hope they would at least let us sleep."

Sango nodded. "Yes, I don't understand this. Lately it was rather calm, even Naraku didn't show up."

"He's probably setting some trap for us. It's never good when he's silent for long," added Miroku.

"Yeah," said Inuyasha leaning on the wall.

Kagome bit her lip, putting the fishes over the fire. "We'll defeat him soon. There's only few shards missing, when we'll find them, everything would end."

Everyone nodded at her words, except hanyou who snorted so loud it was hard to ignore.

The young miko sighed. "What?" she said, turning to look at the silver-haired boy.

"Nothing."

Miroku shook his head. "Inuyasha if you have nothing to say, then don't start."

"Keh. I just wanted to say that if someone didn't need to be protected all the time, maybe everything would be finished already."

The whole camp was silent, waiting for Kagome's reaction.

At first, she wanted to say something, but after a second, she decided it would only lead to an argument. She wasn't in the mood for this. Besides, Sesshoumaru was probably waiting for her already. It was a good moment to leave.

The girl put down her fish, passed the Shikon shards to Miroku and took her bag, where Nero was sleeping. "I'm not hungry," she said. She turned to her fox friend.

"Shippou, are you going with me?"

The child threw away his dinner. "Yep," he said, jumping on her shoulder.

Inuyasha frowned. "Where are you going?"

"Study. I have things to learn."

"But Kagome, are you sure it's a good idea? There still might be some youkai around," said Sango.

The miko shrugged, but knowing the slayer was truly worried about her safety, she replied with a smile. "Without Shikon I'm just an ordinary girl. No one would bother to attack me. Besides, Shippou is with me."

She didn't feel that mentioning she would spend that time in Sesshoumaru's company would be a good idea. She smiled at her thoughts; probably no one would even believe her.

Feeling the last beams of the setting sun on her face, Kagome decided it was time to go. She would be late anyway.

"I'm off. Make sure Inuyasha gets some rest before I come back, okay?" she said, waving at her friends. She walked out, never noticing how Shippou stuck his tongue at Inuyasha or the hanyou's scowl.

"Inuyasha is an idiot," Shippou said, when they walked far enough to stay unheard.

Kagome laughed. "He is, but he's also very tired. Maybe if, I was a better fighter, I would be able to help him," she said, feeling a stab of pain going through her soul. She became a better fighter since she first landed in this era, but she was still the weakest

part in their group. Perhaps if, she was a little more like Kikyou."

"It's Ah-Un!" called Shippou, pulling the girl from her thoughts. She smiled to the two-headed dragon. In return, one of the heads pocked her stomach.

"I know - I'm late. Let's go, Sesshoumaru won't restrict himself to pocking my stomach."

The fox on her shoulder shivered. "Yeah, he would cut our necks."

The dragon huffed, allowing the girl to climb on his back. She did it, promising the reptile an apple after arriving. With a roar, he flew into an evening sky, making sure he omitted all possible dangers.

They arrived after fifteen minutes. The daiyoukai was already waiting, and his frown was enough to tell Kagome he was unhappy with her lateness. Kagome didn't have a chance to put her foot on the ground before he was next to her.

"Miko, you're real"

"Late. I know, and I'm sorry. But it's rather impossible for me to arrive right on time. I'm still traveling with Inuyasha, and that means I can't leave anytime I want. I also need a good excuse to do so."

The daiyoukai arched his eyebrow.

Kagome blushed, turning her head away. "I didn't tell them yet. I'm waiting for the right moment."

"Hnn."

"Yeah. I know," the girl sighed.

"Rin is waiting there."

Kagome nodded, and walked to the side where the small girl was talking with Shippou. The miko smiled, glad that her little fox would have a company in his size. She walked to the children, a bit sad that she had to interrupt their conversation.

"Shippou," she said, "maybe you'll introduce me to your new friend?"

The boy nodded, eager to do so. "Rin," he said turning to his new friend, "this is Kagome. Kagome, this is Rin."

"Hello Lady Kagome. Are you going to tell me stories like Lord Sesshoumaru said?" asked the girl, cocking her head to the side.

Kagome almost squealed at the cute sight. Pushing down the sound, she nodded. "Yes. Is there something you would like to hear?"

Rin thought for a moment. "Can there be some princess in the story?"

she asked, blushing like a tomato.

"Sure!" said Kagome, sitting down, between the children. They sat next to her, but Rin put a little more distance between them. The miko didn't mind, hoping that soon the child would get used to her presence. Since Rin's only requirement was to have a princess in the story, Kagome settled for Cinderella with adjustments to Sengoku reality.

The story turned out to be a big success if Rin's starry eyes were any indications. Once the miko said words 'the end' the girl, supported by Shippou, started to beg for another story. Kagome would have agreed, if not for Sesshoumaru who was staring at her back. She suspected he was getting impatient while waiting for her.

She shook her head, patting children's heads. "Sorry darlings. We'll continue it tomorrow."

They agreed after a moment, and Kagome left them with a smile. She came to the waiting youkai. "So, are you satisfied?"

"Hnn," said Sesshoumaru, turning his head.

Kagome frowned. "Okay, I'll translate it and give myself yes. Then we're starting our training?"

"Yes. Bring here the dragon."

Kagome did as told, taking the sleeping reptile out from her bag. Seeing him, children lost interest in their talk and followed the miko. Sesshoumaru arched his eyebrow at the group. Kagome smiled.

"I think they can stay, right?" she asked, looking at the children.

"Hnn."

"What?"

"Wake him up," said Sesshoumaru in tone that suggested it was the most obvious thing to do.

The miko blushed. "Right."

She put Nero on the ground, shaking him. The dragon didn't even notice, rolling to the side and starting to snore. The girl huffed. She knew Nero was a heavy sleeper, but she thought that after sleeping so long, he would wake up on his own. It seemed this task would require a little more effort from her side.

"Maybe you should throw a bucket of water at him? It always works," proposed Shippou.

Rin shook her head in agreement. "Master Jaken always wakes when Rin does it."

Kagome cringed a bit. "I think he's too young for this, he might get ill," she said.

As she looked at the little reptile, her mind returned to the times

when she was still a little girl and wanted to wake her father. Usually, she jumped on him, which of course woke him in a rather rude way. Later, she developed more delicate ways. Perhaps it was time to refresh old methods.

Smiling, Kagome started to tickle Nero. At first, it seemed to have no effect on him, but soon his legs started to shake and few seconds later, his eyes opened. The dragon huffed, looking around with curiosity until his eyes landed on the miko's face. He growled at her.

"Well, good evening sleeping beauty. I'm glad you decided to join us."

Nero rolled his eyes, falling to the side.

Kagome growled. "Don't even try. Get up now," she said. Her tone left no room for discussion, and the reptile knew it. Nero stretched himself, shook his head, and then sat up staring at his guardian. The girl patted his head, before looking at Sesshoumaru.

He threw a rope to her. She took it, waiting for instructions. The daiyoukai rolled his eyes.

"Tie it around his neck," he said.

"Oh! Like a leash. Okay."

The task turned out to be more difficult than Kagome expected. Her little dragon was so determined to catch one end of the rope that he couldn't stand still. After few tries, both of them succeeded in their tasks, and the miko once again turned to Sesshoumaru for instructions.

"Now walk with him around the clearing. The dragon has to learn to follow you, without wandering to the sides."

The girl laughed. "It's almost like training a dog," she said, turning away. She missed the thunderous scowl Sesshoumaru sent at her back. Feeling the change in daiyoukai's energy, the children ran after the miko and her reptile.

The walk also wasn't as easy as Kagome thought it would be. Nero was distracted by everything from children walking behind them to the falling leaf. His strength was also a problem. The woman didn't think that one-day-old dragon would have the strength of a grown up Labrador. Sometimes, she had to dig her heels into the ground to keep him from breaking away.

After few long and tiring rounds, Kagome decided to make a break.

"Humans are so weak," commented the daiyoukai from the side.

Kagome shrugged. "Maybe, but that often makes us more determined to overcome our failings. We're not giving up easily. Well, at least some of us."

"Hnn."

The girl turned to the dragon, who was trying to catch his tail. "Are you ready to try again?" asked Kagome. In reply, Nero started to chew the end of the rope she was holding. Sighing the miko stood up. She was about to take the first step when from the forest marched a small creature.

"My Lord, I have done as you wiâ€"" Jaken's words died when he noticed the additional people in the camp. "Inuyasha's wench?! How dare you come here and bother my Lord with your disgusting presence?!" he hollered.

Kagome opened her lips to say to never call her wench, but in this moment, she felt the strong pull and the next thing she knew was that she was lying on the ground. From the distance, she heard Jaken's scream.

The woman jumped up. "Nero! No! Don't!" she yelled, breaking into a run. The children followed her.

Using his youkai strength, Shippou managed to catch up with the dragon and catch the rope. However, the reptile was too busy with chasing Jaken to notice additional weight on the other end of the rope. He disappeared in the forest, dragging screaming fox with him.

"Shippou!" called Kagome and Rin, following him into the forest.

Sesshoumaru stood on the clearing shaking his head.

Meanwhile, in the forest Kagome, holding Rin's hand, tried to find her fox friend, following his screams. Since they were moving almost in complete darkness, they often fell, or were hit by some branches. Kagome suspected they were both dirty and scratched all over.

She shook her head. "Sesshoumaru won't be happy when we return, and he'll see you in such state," she said, looking at Rin.

The little girl smiled. "Lord Sesshoumaru doesn't mind it. He would tell me to take a bath tomorrow."

Kagome sighed in relief.

"Kagome!"

The girls stood still, trying to guess from where came the sound.

"I think it was there," said Rin, pointing to the north. Kagome nodded, and they walked in that direction. After few minutes and another scream, they arrived to some clearing.

In the middle sat Shippou, still clutching the end of the rope. He was bruised and dirty, but he didn't seem worried about this if his large smile was any indication. Kagome hugged him, checking if he was indeed all right. Once she finished, her blue eyes wandered to the side, where on some tree sat Jaken, trying to scare Nero, who was waiting for the toad youkai to fall.

Kagome growled. She stormed to the reptile, trying her best to hold down curses blooming in her head. Hearing her steps the reptile

looked back, his golden eyes widened noticing her agitated state. He curled on the ground.

"Listen to me young man," Kagome said, glaring down at the dragon. "Never, ever run away from me. I was worried you'll hurt yourself or Shippou. Next time you'll do it, I'll ground you for the rest of your life, understood?"

Nero growled.

"Good. Now you," she said rounding to Jaken who was still on the tree. "If you call me wench one more time, I'll allow Nero to eat you. Clear?"

"Wah! How dare you to throw threats, you human weâ€""

"What did you want to say?" Kagome interrupted, patting Nero's head.

Jaken gulped. "Nothing."

The girl smiled. "Okay! Now that, we cleared everything, let's go back. All I want is to go back to camp and get some sleep." Shippou nodded, showing his agreement.

The woman sat on the ground and untied the rope from Nero's neck. It seemed to be destroyed anyway. She looked at her dragon. "Don't wander around, okay? Don't make me regret it. I don't want to have to punish you."

Nero nodded.

Kagome took the children's hands. "Okay, let's find the way back."

They nodded, and the trio walked back, with the dragon trailing after them.

It took them some time, but in the end, they managed to come back to the clearing without getting into troubles. Sesshoumaru arched his eyebrow seeing how the dragon followed the miko. Kagome smiled, pointing her head at the reptile. "He's fast learner."

"Hnn."

"Thank you for the praise. Is there something else we should learn today?"

"No. Feed him, and Ah-Un would take you back. Fishes are in the sack," he said, leaning on the tree.

Kagome nodded, walking to the place pointed by the man. However, before she took the fishes out, she gave children some cleaning tissue, and lollipops. Then she fed her dragon, watching how Shippou instructed Rin how to open her candy. She was happy they became friends so fast. Shippou needed it.

When Nero ate the last fish, he nuzzled his head over her leg and laid down at her feet. The miko patted his head. "You're very good

boy, do you know? I'm happy you listened to me."

The dragon purred, closing his eyes. The girl kissed his head. "Have nice dreams," she whispered.

When she was sure, he was asleep, Kagome moved Nero to the bag. Then she walked to the daiyoukai. "Tomorrow?"

He nodded, calling Ah-Un. The two-headed dragon walked to him, bowing his heads.

"He'll take you back."

"Thank you. Shippou, come, we're going back."

The little fox ran to her, after promising Rin he would come back tomorrow. He jumped on the dragon, and when the miko joined him, they flew back. Kagome patted his head.

"You were very helpful with catching Nero today. Thank you."

The boy laughed. "It was fun, except being dragged around. But I knew you will find me." He yawned, rubbing his eyes.

Kagome smiled. "Tired?"

"Yeah."

"Me too."

"Nero is fun."

"Yes," the woman agreed, "just wait until he grows up."

Ah-Un landed, right behind the shack, their friends were camping. Trying to be as quiet as possible, they thanked the dragon, and waited until he flew away. Then they walked back, hoping their friends would be asleep. They were disappointed to find them wide-awake.

Sango's eyes widened when she noticed disheveled state of her friends. "What happened to you?" she asked, her voice full of worry.

"Yeah, you look as if you were chased by hundreds of demons," added Inuyasha.

Shippou chuckled. "Nah, we weren't chased."

"True, we were the one chasing," added Kagome walking to her prepared sleeping bag.

"What?!" hollered Inuyasha, hearing her reply. "Kagome what the hell?!"

The woman shrugged, lying down. Shippou was already snoring, curled on the pillow.

The hanyou jumped on his legs. "Kagome I asked, what the hell?"

The girl laid down her bag, before sliding inside her bedding. "Good night Inuyasha," she said.

The hanyou didn't have time to reply before Kagome fell asleep. He started at her, not knowing what to think about the whole situation.

6. Chapter 6

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CHAPTER 6

"Kagome, I'm talking to you!" said Inuyasha, glaring at the miko who was lying on the sleeping bag.

She sighed, forcing herself to open her eyes. "Inuyasha, please I'm so tired, can't it wait until tomorrow?" she said, trying to focus on the boy's face, which was becoming blurred with every second.

"Hell no! I want to know what's going on! And I want to know now!"

The girl yawned, rubbing her eyes. "Inuyasha I have no idea what you're talking about. Can I sleep now?"

"You know damn well! I want to know where you are spending so much time every night!"

"I told you, I'm studying," she said curling into her pillow.

"Studying what?"

Kagome yawned. "Not your business."

"What?! It's very much my business! You always told me everything!"

"Well, that time is obviously gone. Now let me sleep."

Inuyasha's face took the color of his fire-rat haori. He opened his mouth, but before he could say one word, he was cut by Miroku's voice.

"Be quiet Inuyasha, it's pointless. Can't you see that Kagome is sleeping already?"

The boy looked back at the miko, noticing that the monk was right. Ignoring her surrounding, Kagome fell asleep. Inuyasha huffed, but didn't try to wake her again; instead he jumped on the tree where he sulked for the rest of the night.

When Kagome woke up the next day, he was still in full mood, and refused to talk with her. The girl didn't mind. She had more serious matters to think about, than hanyou behaving like a child. For example, the dragon sleeping in her travelling bag.

It was already two weeks since she started to train him with Sesshoumaru's help, and she still didn't manage to tell her friends about the dragon.

Not from the lack of trying. Over those two weeks, she tried to tell the truth more than fifty times. However, every time something happened that made it impossible. Most of the time, it was youkai's attacks, but there were also times when Inuyasha made it impossible to say a single word, and once it was Kouga's visit.

This one was the most nervous affair since she became Nero's owner. Right after storming into the camp Kouga said: "You smellâ€| different."

Kagome managed to tell him it was because of the new soap she was using, but Inuyasha became suspicious right away. Since then he always wanted to accompany her when she was leaving the camp to study.

The girl sighed, running her hand over her face. She hated what she was doing. Though she did her best not to say a single lie, she still felt like a traitor. After all, she kept information from them. It couldn't be called being truthful.

Kagome sighed again. The longer she kept Nero as a secret the harder it would get to tell her friends about him.

She bit her lip. She couldn't continue with doing this anymore. With a mental nod, she decided she would tell them today.

The miko looked up, only to notice Inuyasha's glare.

Okay, that wasn't the best moment to do so. She looked down at her feet, when the dragon sleeping in her bag rolled on the other side.

No, she couldn't be such a coward. Today, right after she came back from the study session with Nero, she would tell everyone about him, no matter what. Even if, Naraku himself decided to show up in their camp and asked for a cup of tea and cookie, she would do it.

"Kagome, are you okay?" asked a gentle voice.

The girl looked up, noticing her slayer friend. "I'm fine Sango, why are you asking?"

"You looked pale, and since Inuyasha and you had that argument yesterday I thoughtâ€| you know."

The miko smiled. "I'm fine. I just had to think about something. It has nothing to do with Inuyasha though. It's long since his behavior stopped to bother me. He's just throwing a temper tantrum."

"Oi! I heard that!"

Kagome shrugged, not even sparing one look in Inuyasha's direction. "But you know Sango, there's something I would like to talk about with you and the rest."

"Sure, what is it?"

Kagome shook her head. "Not now. Once I finish with studying today I'll tell you all, okay?"

The brown haired woman smiled. "Yes. I think it would be good for you. For some time, you looked as if, you had some troubles. Speaking it out should help you feel better."

"Yeah," said Kagome, smirking out of sudden, "so Sango about speaking out, how are things going between you and Miroku?"

The slayer blushed, taking a quick peek at her fiancÃ©e. "Wellâ€| Miroku started to talk about some wedding. We're starting to wonder if there's a sense waiting with it after we defeat Naraku."

Kagome smiled. "I'm so happy for you guys, and hope I'll be invited for the wedding whenever you decide to make it."

Sango smirked, patting her lips. "Hmmâ€| I'll think about it."

The girls laughed, and the conversation moved to other subjects, lightening the mood of the whole group. In the end, even Inuyasha seemed to be less annoyed. Unfortunately, it lasted only to the evening when the group settled down to have some dinner.

The second Kagome took her bag, Inuyasha exploded. "Again?!" he yelled.

The miko bit her lip. "Yes Inuyasha. I have to."

"You won't go."

"I never told you what to do; you don't have that right over me either."

The boy was about to say something, but he closed his mouth, light blush bloomed on his cheeks. He watched how the young miko put her yellow bag on her shoulder and was joined by their fox friend in the next moment.

"Iâ€| ughâ€|," he tried to say when they were on the edge of the camp. When the girl's blue eyes met his, the boy reddened again. "Fine! Get yourself killed! See if I care!" With that, he jumped up and disappeared in the forest.

Kagome sighed, shaking her head. She felt guilty, if she told her friends about Nero earlier, maybe none of this would be happening now. She looked at her remaining companions.

"I'm sorry guys. I will explain everything when I come back."

"Sure Kagome. Have a good time and be careful," called Sango.

Kagome's eyes fell on Miroku's face. He nodded. "You can always count on our support."

"Thank you," she said, walking into the forest. She had no idea how

Miroku found out, but Kagome had that feeling the monk knew what she was going to say. At least, one person would be on her side. With a lighter heart, she and Shippou walked further into the woods until they found the two-headed dragon waiting for them.

The reptile welcomed them with a quiet roar. After patting both heads, the pair climbed on his back and Ah-Un flew into the evening sky. None of them noticed the pair of yellow eyes watching the whole scene.

They flew for about twenty minutes before arriving. The second after Kagome put her foot on the ground she was engulfed into a warm embrace. She looked down at the small girl.

"Hello Rin, how was your day?" she said.

The child gave her characteristic wide smile. "Rin had a good day and behaved good. Are you going to tell me story Lady Kagome? Can I later play with Shippou?"

The miko patted her head. "Sure, if Sesshoumaru agrees."

"Cool," said Shippou, jumping off the miko's shoulder. He and Rin walked to the side, talking non stop. Kagome smiled, before looking around, in search for another face.

"Good evening Sesshoumaru," she said once she found him.

As always, he said nothing.

The girl shrugged, turning away and taking the bag of her shoulder. Seeing this Ah-Un poked her back.

The girl giggled. "I remember, don't worry. Here are your apples."

The reptile ate his treat, before rubbing his heads over her face in thanks. Kagome giggled again patting them.

"Stupid beast," commented Jaken.

The miko gave herself few seconds to calm down, before looking at the toad youkai. "Good evening to you too, Jaken. Did you say something? I didn't hear."

If Jaken was going to reply, he changed his mind when he noticed dark head peeking from the girl's bag. With quick "No", he jumped up and ran to the first tree, climbing on it.

Kagome did her best not to laugh. It wasn't funny that the poor toad was bullied by her dragon. She tried few times to explain Nero that Jaken wasn't a toy, but he didn't seem to understand. With a sigh, she took her reptile out of the bag, rubbing his head.

"You can play Nero, but don't go into the forest, and don't hunt Jaken, okay?"

The dragon rolled over the ground, before running to the side, right to the tree where Jaken was hiding. The miko shook her head, knowing it was a lost case.

She walked to the children who were already waiting for her.

"So, what story you want to hear today Rin?"

The girl smiled. "About a beautiful princess and the prince turned into a beast."

"Again?" said Shippou.

"Rin loves this story!"

Kagome smiled. "It's one of my favorites too."

"Girls," said Shippou, sitting on the side.

Kagome patted his head. "Don't worry, tomorrow you'll choose one, okay?"

"Fine," mumbled boy, but his tone was less grumpy than a minute before. The miko looked back at Rin.

"Would that be okay?" she asked.

Rin nodded in agreement, and the matter was settled. Now both children listened to the story with full attention until the end. Like always after words 'the end' Rin made a dreamy sigh. Kagome smiled, happy that once again she managed to please her.

"Rin wish she could find her beast."

"Bleh!" commented Shippou.

The miko laughed. "You have a lot of time to do this Rin. Don't worry about this right now. Well, I have to go. Nero is waiting."

The children nodded. Usually they would follow Kagome, but this time they stayed under the tree. The woman sighed. They were both aware about her situation.

She walked right to Sesshoumaru. "What should I do today?"

"Hnn. The same you did for last two nights. You have the last chance."

The woman looked to the side where her dragon was chasing some insect. He was the only one who didn't know how serious atmosphere was around him.

"What if he doesn't learn how to fly?" the girl whispered.

"I'll be forced to cut his wings."

Kagome looked at the youkai lord in horror. "What? You're joking, right? You can't be serious!"

The man arched his eyebrow. Kagome gulped. Okay, she knew Sesshoumaru wouldn't joke. Saying she wouldn't let him do this wouldn't work either. There was no way she would be able to stop him.

"B-Butâ€|why?"

"For his own good. Unused wings might be cause of his death. Either he learns to fly, or I cut his wings."

Kagome was desperate now. "Is there some method I didn't try yet? Or should try again?"

Sesshoumaru seemed to sigh, but she didn't hear any sound coming from him.

"Miko, wherever the dragon learns to fly or not, is in your hands. Since none of the practiced method worked for him, you as his caretaker have to find something that would motivate him to reach the sky."

Kagome felt like crying. If Nero would lose his wings, it would be her fault. She hid her face in her hands. Just great.

Sesshoumaru turned around and started to walk away. She looked at his disappearing back and felt panic settling over her. "W-wait! You're leaving?"

The youkai looked at her from the side. "Hnn. You should focus on the dragon and the less people around the easier it would be for him. Rin, fox come."

"Yes Lord Sesshoumaru!" called Rin, joining him. Shippou wasn't so eager, but his fear stopped him from disobeying the daiyoukai's order. Giving Kagome a worried glance, he walked after Rin and her protector. Even Jaken managed to slip from the tree and ran after the trio.

The miko looked after them for a moment, before sitting on the ground. For the first time since becoming Nero's owner, she felt helpless. So far, she never had any trouble with teaching Nero, even if Sesshoumaru thought her methods were rather unorthodoxy. However, when it came to flying her dragon refused any cooperation.

She was desperate enough she even allowed Sesshoumaru to throw him out of some rock, but even then the reptile hadn't thought of flapping his wings. He was probably sure she would catch him anyway. Which she did, of course.

She looked at the side where Nero was busy hunting for fireflies. Every time he noticed short flash of light coming from the insect, he jumped up, trying to catch it.

If only he decided to move the wings during his jump.

"Nero," she called.

The dragon looked at her, then at the fireflies, before shaking his head and running to his miko. When he reached her, he rolled over the ground, which she knew, was a sign of happiness. His head rubbed over her leg, demanding her attention.

Kagome rubbed his scaly body, and he started to purr.

"I wish I knew what to do. I know you can fly, but I don't know how to motivate you to do that. Maybe I'm not good caretaker for a dragon," she whispered.

Nero looked up at her, cocking his head to the side, before jumping on her legs. The woman laughed, when he poked her stomach with his head.

"I know, I know. I should focus on you and not think how useless I am, right?"

The dragon lightly bit her finger.

"Okay. I'm done with being depressed. There happy?"

Nero purred, cocking his head, to show he wanted to be rubbed over his throat. Kagome did this, before moving her hand to his wings and tickling it.

The appendages moved, trying to escape from the playful torture.

The miko frowned. "You can move them when you want it. How can I make you do it when you're in the air?"

She looked at the fireflies flying around them. As usual, Nero jumped up and tried to catch one of them. She had tried to persuade him to try moving his wings when he hunted for them, but it didn't work so far. Kagome suspected it was because the light disappeared so fast.

She hoped she could use this fascination, and interest him with her flashlight. The light wouldn't fade, giving the dragon reason to remain longer in the air. She tried it few times, but Nero didn't even look at the device.

However, Kagome still felt the answer laid there. The problem was that she couldn't see it.

She sighed, looking up at the moon, once again feeling depressed. She had to find the answer before the time would end. Of course, she wouldn't do so, sitting here and sailing in self-pity.

"Okay," she called, clapping her hands, "let's do something. Nero, come we will train!"

The dragon gave up his chase and ran to her.

Kagome decided she would start from the methods she already tried, just to make sure. So, she threw him up few times, so the fear of falling would provoke him to flying. Nero did nothing, and she, of course, caught him.

Since the method didn't work for them both, Kagome moved to the next one. She bound his front legs together, and left him few feet away, before calling him. In the ideal world, the dragon, unable to walk, would try to fly to his owner. In the real world, Nero rolled over the ground until he landed at Kagome's feet.

The miko groaned. Nero's face told her he had a great time.

She untied his legs, and moved to another method even if that was the one she didn't like.

"Nero, do the same thing I do," she said. She walked around the clearing, jumping up from time to time, all the time moving her hands as if they were wings. The reptile walked after her jumping up, but his wings remained at his sides. After one minutes, Kagome gave up. She felt stupid for even trying this method.

"For sure, the person who came up with it was different," she mumbled, walking to her bag. "Let's try again with a flashlight."

Nero rubbed his head over her legs.

The woman took out the flashlight and turned it on.

The dragon yawned and laid down on the ground.

Kagome felt like stomping her leg.

"Come on Nero," she pleaded, "what have fireflies that flashlight don't?"

Since there was no reply the girl sat on the ground, looking at her friend. "Can't you really force yourself to be interested in it?"

He rolled on his back, presenting her with his tummy.

Kagome threw the flashlight away. "It's so useless," she said.

Feeling her despair Nero stood up, making quiet grumble noise as if he was asking her what was wrong. The miko smiled at him, even though her eyes remained sad. Through her mind was running Sesshoumaru's threat he would have to cut Nero's wings.

"I know you can do it," she said, rubbing reptile's chin. "I know you can, you just need time."

She chuckled. "You're just like me. You know, when I came here I was the worst miko in the world. I still am, but now at least I can protect myself for some time. Look, I even learnt how to make energy ball," with that the girl opened her hands and in the empty palms formed shinning ball of pink energy. Triumphant smile bloomed on her lips at this sight.

"See? At first it was very hard for me to do, but I tried and tried and now I can even move it between my hands andâ€"Nero!" Kagome yelled when, out of sudden, the black dragon jumped up, snapping his jaws.

The energy disappeared from her hands as she stared at the reptile. Her blue eyes lightened while she patted his head.

"Nero, darling, listen to me. Do it again, but try flapping your wings okay?"

The animal growled.

"Just try. You'll see it will work. I know it."

Nero nodded.

Kagome kneeled, raising her hands above her head. Pink energy formed in her hands. "Now," she called.

The dragon jumped up, trying to reach it. He managed to open his wings before he fell back on the ground. The energy ball dematerialized again.

"Good!" said Kagome. "Again."

Nero concentrated on the shinning power in the girl's hands and jumped up. His wings had made full up-down move before he landed.

Kagome squealed in delight. She stood up with her hands on the level of her stomach. "Try now."

The dragon jumped up, his wings moved two times.

"Again."

This time he managed to do only one move. He growled landing on the ground, his golden eyes looked at the miko with sadness.

She shook her head. "Don't give up, you're doing great. Again!"

Nero did that, this time he stayed for a whole five seconds longer above the ground.

"That's it. You're flying. Do it again," Kagome said, raising her hands to her shoulder's level.

Nero's wings started to beat the air in faster rhythm, his nose touched the woman's hand for ten seconds before he fell down.

"Again," called Kagome.

He jumped up, twisting his body so it would be in perfect vertical position against the earth. He tried to move his wings in a steady rhythm. He touched the girl's hand struggling to stay as long in this position as possible. He was panting, when he landed back.

Kagome rubbed his head. "You're amazing Nero. Take your time, when you're ready try to do it again."

The dragon laid down for a minute before stretching his wings. Kagome raised her hand above her head. Seeing widening of the dragon's eyes, she smiled. "I know you can do it," she said.

The reptile looked at her shinning hands. His body took position to jump, his wings stretched up.

"Perhaps try to use your tail," Kagome proposed.

The dragon straightened, looking back at his tail. He moved it few times first from side to side then in circles. He turned back and

took the previous position, this time his tail was a bit raised from the ground.

Kagome held her breath.

Nero jumped up, flapping his wings, climbing higher and higher until his nose touched her hands.

"Try to stay like that for ten seconds," whispered Kagome, counting the time. When ten seconds passed, she let the energy disappear, and the reptile landed. He rolled over the ground, showing his happiness.

"You did it! I knew you would! You're such a great, little dragon!" She rubbed his head for a moment, before raising her hands to her stomach. "Let's do it one last time. You think you have enough strength?"

The dragon huffed.

"Okay," the girl said, forming energy ball in her right hand, "try to catch it."

The reptile jumped up, his wings moved as he flew to her hand, when he was about to touch her it, she moved it away, flipping the energy to her left hand. Surprised Nero landed back, before trying again. This time, when he was about to reach his goal Kagome stepped back, moving the pink power form his reach. The dragon followed her movement, still flapping his wings.

Kagome smirked, raising her hand. Nero did the same, before falling down. He flew up immediately. The miko laughed withdrawing her hand, when he almost reached it. Nero followed her, his movement seemed surer than before. She flipped the energy ball to her right hand, turning around. Seeing that the dragon was chasing her, she moved again, her movements got faster.

Not wanting to give up Nero did the same thing she did, staying longer in the air. His landings were getting more rare and shorter. Kagome noticed he wasn't focusing on his wings any more, too caught up in the game.

The miko laughed, twirling around, once again flipping energy to her left hand.

"He's flying! Lord Sesshoumaru Nero is flying!" she heard Shippou's voice calling from the distance, but she didn't look away.

The dragon was flying all around her, eager to catch shinning ball in her palm.

She felt Sesshoumaru's youki tingling her senses, and she suspected he must have entered the clearing. She closed her eyes for a second, feeling pure joy dancing in her heart. She looked down, quickly moving her hand form Nero's reach and raising it over her head.

She held it there until he touched it with her nose. She looked in his eyes, and before the reptile could do anything she caught his small body in embrace. "You're flying!" she said, kissing his head.

The children ran to her making loud noises, their faces decorated with wide smiles.

"You did it!" Shippou yelled jumping up and down. Rin imitated him, clapping her hands.

Kagome looked at the daiyoukai who was walking to them. "Have you seen it?"

"Hnn."

The woman laughed. "Come on, admit it Sesshoumaru - Nero is amazing."

"You did well."

Kagome smiled, allowing Nero to land on the ground, where the children petted him. She looked back at the man, blushing when she noticed his intense gaze. "I should feed him. Come Nero," she said, walking away, but even then she could feel Sesshoumaru's eyes on her back. She sighed with relief when the man moved to his own dragon.

The miko turned to her reptile. Nero ate almost whole sash of fish, though she wasn't surprised by this, he had intense day and needed to refill his energy.

"I'm so proud of you," she said rubbing his back. The dragon growled, swallowing another fish. When he finished, she put him into her bag, where he curled on her clothes and fell asleep. It took some time before Shippou was able to say goodbye to Rin, but once he did he jumped on her shoulder and yawned. Kagome laughed, walking to the waiting Ah-Un.

"I'll see you tomorrow," she said, looking at Sesshoumaru who stood next to the reptile.

"No."

The girl frowned, and he understood her unsaid question.

"There is a matter I need to attend to. We shall meet in two days."

Kagome smiled. "Oh, okay, have a nice trip then," she said, sitting on the dragon's back. With a roar, the beast flew into the dark sky. Sesshoumaru looked after it for a moment, before turning away.

"Come," he said.

"Yes Lord

>Sesshoumaru!" replied Rin, following him into the woods.<p>

Few minutes later, Ah-Un landed some way from the camp. Kagome jumped from his back, but instead of leaving, she turned to the creature and buried her face in his soft, dark mane. The dragon grumbled, surprised but not angered. His heads rubbed her face. The girl laughed, giving both heads a kiss.

"Thank you. I needed a hug."

The reptile growled.

"I'll be fine, thanks. Now, go back to your master, I'll see you the day after tomorrow."

Two heads had nodded before the dragon flew up into the sky. Kagome sighed, looking after him.

"Don't worry Kagome. They'll understand," said Shippou, laying his small hand on the miko's leg. She looked at him.

"I hope so, and I'm glad you're with me."

The boy smiled, hearing her praise and jumped up on her shoulder. Once he was comfortable, the miko squared her shoulders and walked back to the camp. Her friends were sitting around the fire, talking in quiet voices. They smiled when she and Shippou walked into their line of sight, except for Inuyasha who turned his head away. Taking from his body language, Kagome guessed he was angry.

The young miko tried not to think how angry he would be when he heard where she was. She shook her head, not wanting to get scared now. She put on a smile, laying the bag with Nero on the ground, before joining the rest by the fire.

She took a big breath, fisting hands on her skirt. It was that moment. There would be no turning back now.

"Guys, Iâ€| there's something I need to tell you."

The silence fell over the camp, waiting for the miko's next words. When she didn't continue Sango stood up and walked to her. "Don't worry Kagome, you can tell us everything."

"Thank you Sango. I know I should have done it earlier, but -"

"Shut up."

Everyone looked at Inuyasha who was looking away. The slayer frowned.

"Don't interrupt Kagome. She's trying to tell us something."

"Oh?" Inuyasha said, turning around and standing up. Now everyone could see how angry he was. Kagome was surprised his eyes weren't red yet.

The hanyou shot her glare filled with hatred. The girl gasped, he never looked like that at her.

"What's wrong Inuyasha?" Kagome whispered.

"You ask me?! You traitor! How could you?!"

Kagome paled. "I-I don'tâ€| Inuyasha it's not like you think. Calm down and let me explain."

"Why should I?!" the boy yelled, looking at their companions, "You want to know where she's going to every evening? I'll tell you! She's fucking Sesshoumaru!"

Everyone gasped, turning to look at the young miko, who's face from pale turned to red.

"You're kidding, right? You really think that I and Sesshoumaruâ€|? That's stupid," she said.

"Oh yeah? Then what were you doing on his dragon, eh?"

Kagome crossed her hands. Her previous nervousness was all gone while pure annoyance took its place. "I don't deny I was meeting with Sesshoumaru for the last two weeks. But I was studying, and Sesshoumaru was helping me."

"You think I would believe you?! Sesshoumaru would never help you! You whore!"

Kagome gasped, shocked by his words. Shippou who was silent until now jumped before the miko, glaring at the hanyou.

"Don't call Kagome like that! I was with her the whole time! Sesshoumaru never even touched her!" yelled Shippou.

The hanyou looked at the small fox. "I won't get tricked by you, brat. I know exactly what you were doing."

Kagome stood up. "Don't call him like that! And no, you have no idea what we were doing. In addition, you're too blinded by your anger to hear the truth!"

"You're both traitors!"

"Inuyasha, calm down," called Miroku, walking to his friend and laying a hand on his shoulder. "Kagome is right, we should let her explain."

"Don't butt in monk!" said Inuyasha, pushing the hand away. "Now tell me Kagome, did you had fun two-timing on me?"

For a second everything went still. Kagome wasn't even sure if her heart was beating. Did Inuyasha really dared to say what she thought he did? Something inside her snapped.

"Yes!" she screamed on top of her lungs, "Yes Inuyasha, yes! I had fun! That's what you want to hear?! I was two-timing on you! See how nice it feels?! Now you know how I felt for the last two years. Damn you!"

Attention of the gathered people focused on the hanyou, who was far to shocked to answer. His eyes were wide as he looked at the fuming miko. Miroku shook his head at him.

"And you know what Inuyasha?!" continued Kagome after a short pause. "It's good to know that after traveling together for so long you think I'll be able to do something like this. Pity you didn't say that earlier, I wouldn't waste my time to wait for you, when you two-timed on me."

Inuyasha growled. "It's not the same."

"Of course. You know, I'm done with you, go away. Go to your Kikyou."

"Don't put Kikyou in this."

"Why not? You know Inuyasha, I never understood her that well like in this moment. Finally, I understand why she pinned you to that tree fifty years ago. You never trusted her with all of your heart, so she wasn't able to do that for you. It's a pity that, after all that happened to you, you didn't learn to do that," she said before the whole stress took hold of her and she broke into tears.

Inuyasha watched her, trying to say something, but he wasn't able to form any word. Instead, he stared at her, as if he was seeing her for the first time in his life. "Iâ€œ! Iâ€œ!" he mumbled, but Miroku cut him off.

"I think enough was said today. We should all rest and calm down. Sango, please take care of Kagome."

The slayer nodded, guiding her friend to her sleeping back.

Inuyasha who came out of the shock turned around and disappeared in the woods. No one said anything as everyone decided to settle for the night. Only Kagome's silent sobbing interrupted the silence. Even after returning few hours later Inuyasha was able to smell her tears in the air.

Meanwhile, miles away Sesshoumaru landed on the meadow. Few seconds later, he was joined by Ah-Un. On his back rode Jaken and sleeping Rin. The Lord nodded, before walking inside the dark forest. His pace was slow, and nothing on his stoic face showed how eager he was to reach the destination.

He waited far too long to find answers on the bothering questions, but today he would find out what he wanted. He stopped before an old magnolia.

"Bokusenou," he called, waking up the tree.

After few moments from the tree trunk emerged an old face, its eyes blinked at the young youkai. "Lord Sesshoumaru what are doing here at this hour?"

"Hnn. I need you to tell me everything you know about mikos."

The tree arched its eyebrow. "Mikos?"

"Mikos and dragons."

7. Chapter 7

**Disclaimer: **Inuyasha belongs to Rumiko Takahashi and 'How to train your dragon' is owned by Cressida Cowell and DreamWorks Animation

**AN: **I'm sorry for the long wait, but months May-July were the busiest for me. I hope for some free time now, but I can't promise anything. Once again, my apologies.

CHAPTER 7

"Mikos and dragons?" repeated Bokusenou frowning, "what an unusual request. Especially coming from you, young Lord. I don't think you have started to fear their powers."

"Do not speak foolishness old tree."

The elder youkai chuckled; its leaves shook with its laughter. One leaf fell from its place, landing on the daiyoukai's shoulder. He swatted it away, looking for a brief moment at the dragon near him. Ah-Un huffed, before walking away. The man looked back at the tree. "Now," he said, "speak."

"And what is that you exactly wish to hear? If my memory isn't failing me, we already had a conversation about dragons, when you still were a little pup."

"Hnn," the man said almost cringed at that particular memory.

Bokusenou laughed again. "I remember that day, you just bonded with your dragon and sneaked from your castle. I remember how surprised I was to see the two of you coming here all by your own. It was miracle you weren't attacked."

"I was able to defend myself even then."

"Oh yes, if I'm not mistaken you said the same thing to your father when he found you. He wasn't pleased with your self-confidence, but he was far too relieved to find you alive to punish you. You only got scolded."

"Indeed," said the daiyoukai, but it wasn't whole truth. After taking him back to the castle, his father grounded him for the rest of the spring, except for training with his dragon. It was by far the worst spring in his life.

Sesshoumaru shrugged. "Finish with that nonsense. Tell me is there possibility for a dragon to bond with a miko?"

"Bond? I have never heard about something like this!" exclaimed Bokusenou, now wide-awake. He stared at the young lord for a moment, before closing his eyes. "Hmmâ€œ| on a second thoughtâ€œ|I thinkâ€œ|"

The tree was silent for a long time while Sesshoumaru waited with patience until it would speak again. Knowing it could take more time, the man sat down, closing his eyes. Though he was impatient to find answers, his whole body remained still.

He looked at the sky, which was showing first signs of the dawn. The clouds were taking hue of the red, pink and gold. Gold, like eyes of the dragon.

When the miko came to him searching for help, he never suspected the

dragon would bond with her. He wasn't fool to deny she was an important person when it came to fighting Naraku. He could destroy the hanyou's body, but she was the only one who would destroy his soul and that cursed jewel. However, it didn't mean she was powerful. Yet, to his surprise, the dragon chose her.

At first, he was sure, that it was a mistake that, after few lessons, they would find out she wasn't able to train the reptile, then he would walk in and try to reverse the bonding. But time after time, the girl proved she was the rightful owner of that powerful creature. It confronted with everything he had ever known about the dragons.

That's why he had to find out how was it possible, and what it meant. The fact that the dragon chose the miko suggested she was more powerful than he was, but Sesshoumaru couldn't believe in it. A human could never be more powerful than he was.

"I rememberâ€|," said Bokusenou, taking him from his thoughts.

The Lord stood up and walked back to the magnolia tree. "Then speak."

"Hmmâ€| I remember - it was centuries ago, maybe, even millennium ago. I was still a young tree, and I heard that story from other tree. There was a woman, a miko who bonded with a dragon. Her name wasâ€| her nameâ€| Mitsuko. She wasâ€|"

"Lord Sesshoumaru?" called quiet voice and from the side came Rin rubbing her eyes.

The tree smiled. "Good morning child, did I wake you up?"

Rin blushed, hiding behind Sesshoumaru's leg. "Good morning Master Tree."

An old magnolia chuckled. "Do not be shy child, I shall tell you both a story about a miko who bonded with a dragon."

"Like Lady Kagome?"

"Rin, quiet."

"Yes Lord Sesshoumaru," said Rin, sitting on the ground and focusing on the tree youkai.

It chuckled returning to the tale. "As I said years ago there was a young woman named Mitsuko. She was the youngest daughter of the rich merchant. It was a woman of great beauty and wisdom, and many wanted to have her as a companion, but she refused all the suitors, instead focusing on developing her spiritual powers."

"It was a dark time for both human and youkai race. They were still young, unused to sharing. They were constantly battling for the ground and food. Many lives were lost on both sides, but there was nothing that could stop them from continuing. Everyone prayed to gods for help."

"One night Mitsuko was visited by some unknown goddess in her dream. The goddess told her she could bring peace between both races. The

girl told her she is still very young and weak that she feared she would be killed and unable to fulfill the goddess will."

"The goddess smiled and told her she wouldn't be alone for she would give her a companion who would gain her respect in youkai eyes, and protect her from human's rage. The miko promised to do as she was told, and follow the goddess instructions."

"The next day she changed her robes into a miko outfit and escaped from her house. The goddess guided her on her ways. For days, she didn't meet anyone, until one day she was met with a powerful youkai."

"Like Lord Sesshoumaru?" asked Rin.

The tree chuckled. "Indeed child. He was the first powerful Lord born from youkai race. The miko feared him, but he was a gentle person and spoke to her until she calmed down, and told him about the goddess in her dream. He was surprised because he had a dream in which a goddess told him, he needed to travel here if he wished to bring peace to his race."

"The pair decided their meeting was destined, and from then they travelled together. Unfortunately, their union wasn't enough to bring peace. On one occasion, while trying to prevent another battle between their races they were attacked. To protect the miko, the Lord transformed into his true form which was-"

"Dragon," Sesshoumaru said.

"Yes, young Lord. He was a dragon the first and the only one who ever acquired human form. The moment he transformed, part of his soul exchanged its place with the miko's soul and the two bonded. Taken aback by this soul bonding both human and youkai fell on their knees before them and named them their rulers."

Rin clapped her hands. "Did they marry?" she asked.

Sesshoumaru almost rolled his eyes.

Bokusenou nodded. "They married and ruler for a long time. They settled down many conflicts and soon the lands were blessed with peace. After many years, human chose their rulers and so did youkai. The pair decided it was time to move on with their lives. They called the eight rulers, four human and four youkai to their palace. Each of them got one dragon egg to take care of. After that, the priestess and the dragon disappeared leaving the rule in the hands of the lords."

"But when the dragons were born, the human lords were unable to bond with them. The young dragons got wild without guidance and soon escaped. Human priests decided it was a sign from the gods that dragons are sacred animals, which no human is able to bond with. This view continues till today and the memory of Lady Mitsuko, and her dragon mate was lost with a passing time."

"What happened with the priestess and her dragon?" asked Rin, before yawning.

"No one knows, but the legend says the gods took them to their castle

and from now the couple watch over the dragons and their owners."

"Wow. Lord Sesshoumaru, do you think they watch over Lady Kagome and Nero?" the child murmured.

"Hnn. Rin go to Ah-Un."

"Yes Lord Sesshoumaru. Bye, bye Master Tree thank you for the story."

Sesshoumaru waited until the girl disappeared in the woods, before looking back at the magnolia tree. Bokusenou frowned.

"I think it's time for your story young Lord."

"Hnn. A miko bonded with a dragon."

"If I didn't know you, I would think you are fooling me. And I'm not sure if I wouldn't prefer that."

"Hnn."

"Tell me everything and I would try to give you my best counsel."

The tree and the daiyoukai spoke in hushed tones for many hours. When they finished, the sun was already setting. The color of the sky matched the gold hue of the eyes of the daiyoukai.

"Now, everything depends on your decision," Bokusenou said.

Sesshoumaru nodded. He turned around and without a word he walked into the woods, where was waiting the rest of his companions. They looked at him, but Sesshoumaru didn't spare them one gaze. "Wait here," he said, before disappearing further into the forest.

His steps were slow, his silver hair danced in the air. He didn't think that a girl, travelling with his stupid brother would give him so much trouble. Maybe he should kill her when he had the chance. On the other hand, he didn't succeed in killing her when he tried. Perhaps it was a sign for him?

The daiyoukai huffed. How was it happening that he always got tangled in his half-brother's affairs? First it was Naraku, now the girl and her dragon.

For a moment, he wondered if she told him about the reptile. If not, it would be his pleasure to inform the boy about it, and watch how his face twists in disbelief. After all, annoying Inuyasha was somewhat compensating occupation.

Sesshoumaru smirked, before turning around. He didn't need more time to think. Without delay, he walked to the place where others waited. "Come," he said, stepping into the air. The child and the toad jumped on Ah-Un's back, trying to catch up with their leader.

Behind their back, the sun hid behind the horizon.

Meanwhile, miles away, Kagome managed to open her eyes. Her head hurt, like always after the night of crying. She wanted nothing more than go back to sleep, but a strange worry stopped her from that. She rubbed her eyes looking at her companions. Her eyes widened, noticing the thick mist covering the camp. When she looked up, the uneasy feeling only got stronger at the sight of the clear sky and the setting sun.

Kagome blinked. It was impossible. Though she was sure she was able to sleep the whole day, she doubted rest of her friends was, especially Inuyasha. The miko stood up, falling on the ground in the next second. Her head was both light and heavy, and it took all of her strength not to fall asleep. Something was wrong, very wrong.

"Guys," she called, but her voice died in the mist. Her body was shaking, and she knew she had to act fast, or there would be too late. Her hand found her way to the bag. Acting out of instinct, she opened it, her fingers grazed scaled body of her dragon. A single spark ran through her soul, waking her up.

Kagome jumped up. "Guys! Wake up!" she called.

There was no response. Kagome closed the bag, took it on her shoulder and turned to Shippou. She caught the boy in her arms, shaking his small body while she ran to the sleeping slayer.

"Sango wake up, wake up!" she called.

At this moment, Shippou managed to open his eyes.

"Mmmâ€œ I'm sleepy," he murmured.

Kagome put him on the ground, took two lollipops from her bag and pushed it in his mouth. The boy's eyes widened, and Kagome hoped this sudden sugar rush would keep him awake for some time. She turned back to the sleeping Sango.

Since her shaking had no effect on her, the miko started to think about some other way to pull her from the dreamland. Kagome's eyes fell on the mask Sango wore from time to time. Hoping that strange need for sleep came from the mist, she put it on her friend's face. Crossing her fingers it would work soon, she turned to check on Shippou. He was sucking on the lollipops, all the sleepiness gone.

"Call me if she wakes."

The boy nodded, still not fully aware of what was going on, but awake enough to follow the miko's lead. Meanwhile, Kagome moved to the next person in their group, which was Miroku.

The girl was worried how she would wake up the monk; however, when she approached him, and heard him talking in his sleep, her worry turned into annoyance.

"Yes my ladies, not at the same time."

In the next moment, Miroku's hand rubbed her calf. Kagome closed her eyes and slapped him with all her might.

"Pervert," she said, leaving now awaken man on the ground, nursing his cheek.

Next on the list was Inuyasha. At least, waking him wasn't a problem. She just hoped that long sleep, helped him to calm down after yesterday.

"Sit boy!"

Inuyasha hit the ground, just in a moment when Shippou called her.
"Kagome, Sango is waking!"

The miko ran to the slayer, who held her head. "What's wrong? Why did you wake me up?"

Kagome was about to answer when another person cut her off.

"Oi! Stupid wench, what do you think you're doing?!"

"Sit boy."

Inuyasha hit the ground for the second time.

The miko turned to her slayer friend. "Come Sango, you have to get up."

The woman growled, but allowed the miko to pull her up. Miroku walked to them still sporting large bruise.

"Lady Kagome," he said, "I have to ask the same question. Why are you so eager to wake us up?"

"Yeah wench!" Inuyasha added from his hole in the ground.

Miko pointed at the setting sun. "We slept a whole day! And there's that strange mist. Something just isn't right."

The group listened in silence, trying to connect the facts and fight with the returning tiredness. Sango reacted first.

"Dear gods it's a hunt. We must be in the middle of the hunting grounds."

"Shit!"

Kagome looked at the hanyou, then back at her friends, who became gathering their things in fast speed. "Someone can explain?" she said.

The slayer took Kirara in her arms, trying to wake her. The cat didn't respond. "We're going to be attacked."

"What? By who?"

Sango started to tie her hair in a high ponytail. Inuyasha threw all of their belongings under some tree where they would be out of the way. Miroku was preparing sutras.

When the slayer finished her task, she replied. "Some youkai clans

hunt for entertainment, when they gather together. They put a dark spell on some piece of lands, which takes the form of smoke or mist. Any creature that walks inside it falls asleep."

"But that isn't hunting," Kagome said.

"No, it's preparation. They gather preys in the same place. The hunt begins right after the sun set. The mist would disappear, and everyone inside will wake up. The clan will spread around, hunting preys that they think is worth their time. The youngest would go after rabbits and other small animals. Those older, after some deer or weaker youkai, the strongest would huntâ€" "

"Us," Kagome finished.

Sango nodded. "It's not going to be easy. Good thing you managed to wake up, it gave us some time to get ready."

The miko bit her lip before turning to the monk. "Miroku, do you have sutra used to create shields?"

The man took a piece of paper from his robe.

"Thank you. Shippou come here."

The fox ran to her, already knowing what she was going to say. "I can help," he protested.

"I know, but I would be calmer knowing you're well protected. Besides, you would help by watching over, you know, stuff," Kagome said, giving a quick look at her bag.

Shippou understood her unsaid message. "Sure," he said, walking to the place where laid their belongings.

Kagome took out her arrow, tied around it Miroku's sutra and shoot into the ground. The arrow glowed, forming pink sphere around the boy and her bag. The miko gave it one look before running to the rest of the group.

The sun hid behind the horizon.

Just as, Sango said in that moment, mist evaporated, leaving clear space around them and eerie silence. Kagome felt chills running over her spine. For the first time, she thought, I know how it is to be chased animal. The miko decided she was going to become vegetarian once she returned to her time.

She thought about the amazing chicken her mother did with chocolate souse. Okay, so maybe she didn't have enough strong will to become vegetarian. She shook her head, clearing it from useless thoughts. It wasn't the right time to think about such stuff. It would be better to focus on surviving until the next day.

But there was one thing she would have to talk about right after the battle, she thought looking at the pink barrier which hid the small fox, and a dragon in her bag.

"Guys, after we're done remind me I have to tell you something important."

Inuyasha scowled. "So you weren't done yesterday?"

"Yesterday I heard only your accusation Inuyasha, you never let me finish," Kagome said.

"As if I wanted to hear the rest."

Kagome rolled her eyes, but decided that it wasn't the right time to start an argument.

Somewhere from the forest came low roar. Inuyasha drew Tetsusaiga from its sheath, before sniffing the air. "Black bears."

Kirara, who until now slept on Sango's arm, woke up. The cat shook her head, before sniffing the air and transforming into her battling form. She growled, looking at the darkening forest.

"They are coming," said Inuyasha. "Get ready."

Kagome put an arrow in her bow. "You know, I will sound like a coward, but for once I wish we could escape."

Sango smiled patting her back. "Don't worry. I have that feeling every time. The fact I was taught how to fight doesn't change that."

"Thank you Sango."

"Here they are," called Miroku, throwing sutra into the woods. They heard painful growl, when it hit its goal.

Before they could attack again, a few arrows flew in their direction. The shards hunters, dodged them, but by doing this, they separated. Kagome fell near the barrier that was guarding Shippou.

"Kagome behind you!" the boy yelled. The miko rolled to the side, raising her hand. The pink orb hit the chest of her attacker, in the last possible moment. The sword he held in his hands fell next to her head.

She jumped up, before throwing the sword away and looking around the clearing. With every passing second, it was getting darker, and she had troubles distinguishing the fighting figures. However, one thing was sure - they were outnumbered.

"We need some light," yelled Miroku in distance.

Without thinking, Kagome notched another arrow in her bow and shot it into the air. To her own surprise the light exploded over their heads, the sparks gathered into the orbs, before hanging into the air and illuminating the whole place. The miko blinked not sure, how she managed to do it.

Unfortunately, it seemed to concentrate unwanted attention on her person.

"She's mine," called one of the attackers jumping in her direction, his hand raised and ready to strike.

The miko screamed shooting in his way, but the arrow missed him just an inch. The girl jumped away, just as he cut the air where she stood second ago. Knowing she didn't have time to ready next arrow, she raised her hand forming orb in her hand and throwing it at her attacker. She missed once again.

The man laughed. "You can try one more time if you wish," he said.

Kagome gulped, leaning against some tree. Her hand moved back, fisting on the arrow. The man walked closer to her, and she noticed smirk on his face. "Come now sweetie, make it more interesting, attack me."

Kagome gritted her teeth. "As you wish."

Raising her hand, she formed orb in her palm, taking a step in the man's direction. He took a step back, moving to her left side, sure he already won. The miko waited for this. As fast as she could she moved her hand with the arrow, pushing it in his side and sending purification wave. The youkai yelped, before falling dead on the ground.

"That's enough fuckers! You are going down!" she heard Inuyasha's yell from the side. "Wind Scars!"

The miko closed her eyes as the powerful energy swallowed another three bear youkai. In the next moment, in the air flew Sango's boomerang. Miroku wasn't far behind throwing sutras and fighting with his shakujo.

The miko didn't have time to catch her breath when she heard Shippou's cry. She looked in his direction horrified when she noticed two youkai trying to break the barrier.

Without a second thought, she ran to them, ready to defend her little friend. The attacking bears had the appearance of children around Souta's age. She froze for a moment listening to their conversation.

"Look Ichiro, how low for a youkai to hide under a miko's barrier," the taller boy with dark ponytail said.

His companion laughed, "Yeah, come out little fox, so we can play with you."

Shippou scowled, growling under his breath.

"If you go out I'll allow you to be my pet!" the taller boy said.

"Fuck off! As if I would listen to some stinking bear like you!" Shippou said to Kagome's pride and distaste for his choice of words. Inuyasha's style seemed to rub on him anyway. And just as Inuyasha's behavior, Shippou's words weren't welcome.

The bear youkai gritted his teeth. "I'll give your tail to my mom," he said, before punching the barrier with his wooden sword. For Kagome, it was time to act. Before the boy could hit the barrier again, Kagome shot his hand with her powers, not hard enough to hurt

him, but enough to make him drop his weapon.

"What the fuck?!" the boy yelled, looking at her. The smaller one took a step back, shaking the other's arm.

"Takeo it's a miko."

"Exactly. Now leave I'll be forced to use my powers again," Kagome said.

The smaller boy, Ichiro was quite eager to do as she said, but Takeo didn't even move a muscle before he smirked at her. "You're only a filthy human, why should I do what you said?"

Kagome knew she couldn't react on his empty bravery. He was still just a child; he was imitating the action of the people he knew. She couldn't purify him, not before she was sure she tried to save him. "Leave boys, before I'll do something I'll regret for the rest of my life."

The boy snickered. "Look Ichiro, she really thinks she can hurt us! Dad was right, humans really are stupid!"

Kagome almost snapped, but seeing fear in the eyes of the younger boy, she decided to approach them from the other angle. Takeo was still laughing when Kagome's arrow flew next to him, injuring his arm. The mocking smile turned into an expression of shock.

The girl frowned, reading another arrow. "I missed on purpose. Next time I won't do so. Now leave!"

"Come Takeo. Please."

"No, I won't run because of some human filth."

Ichiro took a step back, shaking his head. "Then you're on your own," he said, before disappearing in the forest. Takeo looked after his companion, before turning back to her.

"Last chance," she said.

The boy took few steps back before he too ran away. Kagome watched after them for a bit longer before falling on her knees.

It was too much for her, this hate and lack of care for others live; and to think they were just children. She prayed that at least one of them remembered their meeting today and understood why she didn't hurt them. This fight between humans and youkai had to end. It had to.

"Kagome, you okay?" asked Shippou, coming closer to the barrier.

The miko smiled. "Yeah. Don't worry."

A dark head peaked from her bag, startling the pair. "Oh Gods," moaned Kagome seeing her dragon, "not now. Shippou make sure he doesn't go out okay? Try to keep him in the bag." The boy nodded, walking to the yellow backpack and its inhabitant. "Nero, listen to Shippou. Stay where you are."

The dragon growled, looking in her eyes.

The miko smiled before standing up. Taking calming breath, she straightened and put an arrow in her bow. After all, the fight wasn't over. Her friends were still under attack. She had to help them.

Looking around she assessed who needed her help the most. When she had the clear view of the situation, she raised her bow and shot one arrow after another hurting attacking youkai, making them unable to fight. She didn't want to kill again. All she wanted was to finish this craziness.

Just in the moment when she thought it was going to end soon, she heard Shippou's scream. "Kagome look out!"

The girl rounded just as the sword went down and cut her bow in half. The sword's tip grazed her cheek, leaving bloody line in its place. Kagome took a step back, raising her eyes to look at the one who attacked her.

"You killed my brother. I will cut your head and hang it on the wall," the man said. His eyes shined with eerie green light. He was wearing black armor over green kimono. In his hand was a long sword, while another hung from his waist.

The girl gulped taking a step back, knowing she was now defenseless and couldn't hope her friends would help her.

"Die!" he yelled, attacking.

As the sword went down, the girl jumped to the side, before breaking into ran. She heard how the man followed her, but she didn't waste time to see how far he was. Trying to control her breathing, she let her instinct guide her, telling her when she should bow, or jump away. Since she managed to stay alive, she suspected it was the right way to stay alive. She heard how the sword cut the air near her all the time.

Feeling how her legs were starting to grow tired, the miko started to think over the ways of defending herself. She knew that if she stopped even for a second she would end dead.

However, it seemed that even thinking was a mistake. She tripped over some rock she didn't notice, and with a cry she fell on the ground. To her horror, she didn't manage to stop her fall, and her leg hit another rock. Kagome heard a sound of the snapping bone and the pain blinded her mind.

Yelling, she rolled over to lay on her back. She clenched her eyes, trying to hold back another cry. Hearing steps of her attacker, she forced herself to look up at him. The arrogant smirk on his face annoyed her enough to prop herself on her arms.

"Humans are so fragile," the man said.

Kagome tried to focus and gather her spiritual powers, but the pain was too strong for her.

The man laughed at her efforts, which made her scowl. Her body

trembled under the stress, seeing how he raised his sword. It was the end. He was going to kill her.

Inuyasha yelled her name in distance, alarming rest of her companions, but she knew it was too late. None of them would be able to help her. If she wanted to stay alive, she had to do it on her own. Once again, she tried to call her powers, but pain from the broken leg made it impossible to concentrate.

The youkai laughed again. "Die miko!"

"No!" called Inuyasha.

Kirara roared.

Kagome closed her eyes.

Another roar filled the clearing, this one was louder, but for Kagome it sounded like a cry of a child. For a few seconds, the whole place fell into a dead silence. Gasping, the girl opened her eyes to see the bear youkai holding the sword just above her head. Her attacker's body seemed paralyzed.

Kagome heard a sound of steps, and she noticed a small, dark shape running their way from behind the bear.

The man must have heard this approach too because he turned around to see who was attacking him.

"No!" she heard Shippou's cry.

Her mind put facts together in less than a second. Her eyes filled with tears. No, it couldn't be happening. Not like this. No! No! No!

"What the hell?" whispered the bear, taking a step back.

Kagome fell to the side. "No! Nero no!" she called, but it was too late.

The dragon ran to them, before jumping up like when he chased fireflies. His tiny claws dig into the man's flesh, his white fangs closed over the bear's nose. The blood spluttered over the man's face. He dropped his sword, yelling in pain.

The youkai raised his hands, catching Nero's body and trying to push him away from his face. The dragon held on, making quiet, angered growls.

Kagome gasped seeing how the youkai tried to plunge his claws into Nero's flesh. Her pain was overcome by rage at the thought that her dragon could be hurt. Her energy swirled around her as she forced her body to make leap into the man's direction. He didn't notice it, too busy with his struggle.

"Leave my dragon!" Kagome screamed throwing purifying orb at him.

It hit the man in the calf. He growled, finally managing to rip the dragon from his face. He threw him away, the reptile's body fell few feet away from the miko. Kagome cried, crawling to her

dragon.

"Nero, do you hear me?" she said, stroking his head. The dragon grumbled opening his golden eyes.

However, Kagome didn't have time to enjoy this moment.

"You witch rot in hell!" yelled the youkai, running to them with raised sword. Kagome screamed when it went down, but she opened her eyes hearing how the blade was parried. She almost gasped noticing the pink shining barrier surrounding her and Nero.

This only angered her attacker. His sword clashed over the barrier time after time, sending waves of pain through the girl's body. Still she raised her hands to put it on the barrier trying to strengthen it. Since she had no idea how she created it, she wasn't sure if she did the right thing, but there was no way she was going to lay down and wait what would happen.

The youkai wasn't planning to do so too. His face was twisted in rage, blood was dripping from his wounds, smearing his clothes and armor. Red drops fell on the barrier before sizzling, sliding to the earth.

The bear seemed to get more furious with every drop of blood he was losing. He was cursing, every hit of his sword held more power. Kagome saw small cracks showing on the barrier.

"Kagome I'm coming!" she heard Sango's voice before it was overcome by voices of other fighters.

"Fucking witch! You'll die today! And no one will save you!" the bear yelled, hitting the barrier like a madman. After one attack, the barrier shattered, and the sword stabbed Kagome's arm.

Kagome cried, but she had no strength left to defend herself. With the last desperate movement, she covered Nero's body with her own. If she was going to die, she was going to save him.

"No!" screamed Shippou when the sword went.

Hot blood splashed over Kagome's body.

"Wrong move."

The voice sent chills down the miko's spine, and she opened her eyes to see how the dead bear slid of Sesshoumaru's sword. This time Kagome allowed tears to fall down her face. Her body fell on the ground, curling around her dragon. He whimpered nuzzling his head over the girl's face.

"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry everyone," she whispered before the darkness swallowed her.

8. Chapter 8

**Disclaimer: **Inuyasha belongs to Rumiko Takahashi and 'How to train your dragon' is owned by Cressida Cowell and DreamWorks Animation

AN: I'm very sorry I didn't update. However, I got new job and real life has the priority, but as you can see I'm back now, and I'll try to do my best to once again update regulary. Thank you for waiting, and supporting me.

CHAPTER 8

Darkness. It was so thick she could touch it, smell it and even taste it. It should be scary, but after a second, Kagome decided it was comforting. That thought was surprising since she always felt a little scared of darkness.

The young woman sighed, before looking around. It was the first moment when she noticed something wasn't right. She couldn't remember how she got to this place, or where it was. What was even more worrying, she couldn't feel her body.

For a second horrible thought ran through the girl's head. What ifâ€¦ what if she was dead?

No, reasoned Kagome, she didn't remember dying, but then she couldn't remember anything. However, people often said they saw a light, not some strange darkness after dying, or maybe, she was just special. That wouldn't be the first time, when she didn't fit the norm.

On the other hand, if dying felt like this, then it wasn't as scary as she thought it would be. Maybe she shouldn't be too worried about it. Then maybe she should worry, there was a lot of things she left unfinished, like Shikon, her friends, her family, her dragon.

Her little Nero. He was still just a baby; he needed someone to take care of him. Of course, she suspected that her friends or Sesshoumaru would do that, but for some reason it made her unhappy. It shouldn't end like this, she promised his true mother she would take care of Nero.

At this moment, the darkness started to vibrate. At first, she could only see it, but after a minute, vibrations turned into a sound, which reminded purring. It was comforting and a little nagging. As if, someone was poking her to wake her up.

That snapped something inside her. That was it - she was asleep. Her memory came back to her in a rush. Pictures flew through her mind: argument with Inuyasha, strange mist, hunt, attacking youkai, fighting Nero, and her savior â€“ Sesshoumaru. The dead bear sliding of Sesshoumaru's sword was the last thing she remembered.

That memory brought a rush of pain and the girl gasped, understanding that the pain wasn't just work of her imagination, it was physical feeling. Her whole body was in pain. The girl gasped again, trying to block that feeling, but it didn't help if anything it only made it worse.

Kagome gasped again, seeing a light breaking into the darkness, followed by a voice she knew very well.

"She's waking up! Kagome, Kagome do you hear me?"

The girl groaned, bringing up her hand and massaging her

head.

"Kagome, say something! Please!"

The girl blinked, before looking to the side and smiling. "I hear you Shippou, you don't have to scream."

The little fox smiled, his tail swished from side to side. "I'm so happy! You were out for two days. I was so worried!"

The miko blinked. "Two days? That'sâ€¦ long."

"That's true Lady Kagome, you made us all worried, but except Shippou I think the most worried was your little friend," said Miroku, walking into her line of vision.

"Huh?" the girl said.

The monk smiled, pointing away. The girl tried to sit up to see to what he was referring to, but didn't have enough strength to do so. Seeing her unhappy expression the monk helped her to rise. The girl blinked, seeing the dragon curled on her leg.

"Oh," she said, looking back to her friend, "I see you got to know each other while I was out."

"It wasn't difficult, the little thing refused to leave you for a second," said another voice, and Kagome managed to turn a bit to see how smiling Sango and Kaede entered the hut she laid in. The miko returned their smiles. She was happy everyone was still talking to her, even if they found out about her reptile.

The slayer walked closer, giving her a warm hug. "How are you feeling Kagome?" she asked.

"Sore," the girl replied.

"It's not a surprise child," said Kaede, "you were in bad shape when the rest brought you here. The worst was your leg, it was broken."

The younger miko sighed. "I thought so. At least it doesn't hurt as much as I thought it would," she said, looking at her appendage on which slept Nero. For a moment, she wanted to reach for him and stroke his scaly head, but she knew he was out of her reach. She looked back at Kaede. "How long it would take to heal?"

The older woman smiled. "Oh I think ye would be able to walk without a cane in fourteen days."

Kagome blinked. "So fast? I thought broken leg is more troublesome."

"It is, but yer isn't broke anymore."

"What?" asked Kagome, "but you saidâ€¦"

"I said that when you arrived you had broken leg, but I guess, thanks to your little friend your bone is almost healed."

Kagome blinked, looking from Kaede to her dragon and back. "B-but how?"

The woman laughed, before coming closer with a cup of green tea. She handed it to her, and Kagome drank it almost in one gulp. She didn't notice before just how thirsty she was. When she finished, she looked back at Kaede waiting for some answers.

The old woman smiled. "I don't know how, but when ye came here ye had a broken leg, your dragon spent a whole night sleeping on your leg and in the next day, there was almost nothing left of your injury."

"Wow," whispered Kagome.

The people in the hut chuckled at her reaction.

"Now," said Miroku cutting into the conversation, "Lady Kagome, maybe you could tell us how did this little reptile come into your care? Of course, if you feel strong enough for that."

The others, except for Shippou, also looked interested in her answer. Kagome sighed. She had no problems with that, but it made her sad she was going to do it now after they found out about Nero on their own. It wasn't suppose to be like that.

However, now it was too late, to worry about that. With another sigh, Kagome told the whole story from the moment she was kidnapped by the dragoness, through the birth and bonding with Nero, to the point when he revealed himself during their battle.

Once she finished, she hid her face in her hands. "I wanted to tell you that so many times, but there was always something that made me stop. The last time when I was going to tell you Inuyasha accused me of sleeping with Sesshoumaru and after that, everything went from bad to worse."

Kaede patted her arm, handing her another tea. The young miko sipped the liquid, noticing she was getting stronger with each cup. There must be some medicine in it, she thought. The girl finished the rest of the drink, before continuing. "I'm not very angry at Inuyasha for this. I expected he would get furious when I told him Sesshoumaru was helping me, but I never thought he would think I'm sleeping with him. That was just soâ€| stupid."

The woman sighed while Kaede forced her to take another cup with tea. Kagome smiled, before looking at her friends. "Still, I'mâ€| I'm sorry I didn't tell you. I was just worried you would say I have to leave Nero, and I couldn't do that," the girl said turning away and focusing on her drink.

A silence fell over the group. Kagome didn't dare to look at anyone, she didn't feel ready to see their reaction. What would she see in their eyes? Hurt? Betrayal? Disappointment? No, she didn't want to know.

Shippou jumped to her, leaning on her stomach. The girl embraced him, kissing the top of his head, thanking him for his support.

"Well," Miroku said, breaking the invisible tension, "though you

should tell us about the dragon, I can understand your concern about doing this. We were quite opposite to your proposition to take the egg. You had reasons to worry how we would react when you told us about the bonding."

The girl sighed. "The worst thing is that I wouldn't be able to leave him, even if you told me to. It would be like leaving a part of me."

The monk nodded, before standing up and walking to her. Kagome looked up when he touched her arm.

"Well," Miroku said smiling, "we all did something we are not very proud of during our friendship, even if we had the best intentions. For example, Sango stole Tetsusaiga and gave it to Naraku to save her brother. I stole the Shikon Jewel, almost kidnapped you, stole your bike and almost sucked Inuyasha into my wind tunnel."

"Yeah," Shippou piped in, "and I left Kagome alone when we were attacked by Thunder Brothers. And Inuyasha is still seeing Kikyou!"

Miroku managed to hide his smile just on time. "Anyway," the man continued, "we all followed our hearts, even if the outcome didn't turn out to our expectation, and yet we were forgiven. I don't see why we shouldn't let your mistake slip away. After all now that we think about it, the dragon is an amazing addition to our group."

Sango nodded, joining them and squeezing Kagome's hand. "It's true. Besides, we have to remember that usually when you do what you think is right, you're correct. Maybe it's a matter of your miko instinct, but perhaps it was destined for you to meet that dragon."

The young miko looked at them, trying to contain tears of happiness. "Thank you guys, thank you," she said embracing them.

A quiet roar disturbed the tender moment. All eyes turned to the dragon that was waking up. Kagome smiled seeing how his golden eyes opened. The moment, the reptile noticed her he growled, reaching his owner in one jump. The girl laughed rubbing his neck while he tried to push his head under her arm.

"He's very fond of you," commented Sango, laughing at the scene.

Kagome smiled, at last managing to calm Nero laying him on her stomach and rubbing his head. The reptile purred in content. The girl looked at him for some time before she bit her lip. "Where is Inuyasha?" she said.

It was Kaede who answered. "Oh, he's sulking on the roof. Ye can't feel him because he's trying to send his youki the other way."

The girl frowned. "Huh?" she said.

Miroku chuckled. "Well, since Sesshoumaru is near he's trying to ward him off you. Though I suppose it's not really working since Sesshoumaru didn't move away from the village."

"Oi, I heard that!"

Kagome giggled while the monk growled. "Ears from hell."

"Inuyasha!" Kagome called, "can you come down and talk with me?"

"No! Traitor!"

"Hey!" the miko huffed, crossing her hands, "I said I'm sorry, besides I'm sure now you know Sesshoumaru was only helping me with training Nero."

The hanyou growled. "Yeah? And he saved you just because he likes to be a teacher, right? And it is the reason why he doesn't want to leave. I'm not getting down until he's here."

The girl sighed, shaking her head. "Inuyasha, please, it's stupid to talk to the roof. Come down! Please!"

"No way, wench!"

This time, Kagome growled her pale face gained some red color. However, before she could say something she heard Inuyasha's annoyed growl followed by a string of curses. At the same time to the hut ran small girl with a bright smile. "Lady Kagome you're awake!"

The miko blinked. "Rin! Nice to see you," she said.

The girl smiled, and made a move as if she wanted to come and hug Kagome, but instead she just stepped closer to the wall. Knowing that Rin was very shy around strangers, she understood that reaction. What a pity that I can't stand up, thought Kagome smiling at the girl, hoping it would help her relax.

"Lady Kagome, are you feeling better? Lord Sesshoumaru wants to know if you're able to walk. He wants to see you."

The miko blinked surprised that Sesshoumaru would inquire about her health, or wish to see her, but after few seconds, she came to the conclusion he must be thinking about reassuming the dragon training. To be honest, she was quite eager herself. As if he could read her thoughts, Nero purred in agreement.

The woman patted his head, before looking back at the girl who was still waiting for the answer. "I'm better and if Sesshoumaru agrees I would come for another lesson this evening."

The girl clapped her hands and ran out before anyone could say something. Kaede looked at her patient with worry. "I'm not sure it's a good idea child. Ye're still tired and should rest a bit longer."

Kagome waved her hand. "I slept for two days, right? I got all the needed rest, and that tea helped a lot too. Besides my grandpa always says that laying in bed only prolongs illness. The faster I get up the better, and Nero needs to continue his training. He needs to practice flying. Also, I think there's someone who's also eager to meet with his little ward."

Shippou blushed after her last words, hiding his face in her stomach.

In a next moment, they heard a loud thud, and Inuyasha walked inside the hut with furious expression. "You aren't going anywhere near that bastard again! Do you hear me?" he yelled.

The woman frowned. "Inuyasha sit," Kagome said.

While the hanyou tried to scramble out of the floor, she turned to the rest of her friends. "Can you help me get up?" she pleaded.

Miroku frowned. "Are you sure it's a good idea?"

"Yup. And I'll do it with your help or without, though I would prefer the first option."

Sango giggled, pulling the miko to her feet and helping her to lean on her. Kaede handed her a wooden stick. Kagome took it, placing it under her arm, before letting go of her slayer friend and putting weight on the cane. She took few steps testing it.

"Well, that's not so bad," she said. She didn't want to say aloud that now she felt just how her body hurt. Especially her left arm when she remembered being stabbed by the youkai's sword. With a sigh, she sat down. Nero joined her immediately curling to her side. "Okay, I'll survive," the miko said, "I only hope Sesshoumaru wouldn't order me to run around."

"I told you, you're not going anywhere!" Inuyasha said, managing to stand up from his punishment.

"Inuyasha, please, be rational. I have to train Nero, and I doubt you can help me with it."

The boy scowled, looking at the black dragon sitting next to her. "Hell not! But I can help you get rid of that stupid lizard," he said, putting a hand on his sword.

Kagome's reaction was instant. She caught Nero in her embrace, yelling sit until the hanyou laid in a hole of dirt. Even then she was glaring at Inuyasha's prone form.

"Shit! Stupid bitch! That thing corrupts you!" the boy yelled from his hole.

The miko didn't agree. "What got into you? I know you're angry about Sesshoumaru and I understand this, but that's not Nero's fault. Don't you dare take that on him! Why don't you try to befriend him?"

"Fuck! Never! I'll rather make peace with Naraku!"

The miko blinked, looking at her purring dragon, then at Inuyasha still in his hole. "Why not? He's such a sweet thing. You could be very good friends."

Everyone started to giggle, not even trying to hide it. Kagome looked over her friends confused by their reaction. She waited a moment, but

when no one bothered to explain, she frowned. "Care to share?" she said.

Miroku who managed to calm a bit was the one who replied. "Well, Kagome," he said leaning down and patting dragon's head, "it seems your little friend has some strange dislike for Inuyasha. Whenever he tried to come closer to you, the dragon was growling and tried to bite him."

The girl gasped, looking at her dragon. "Really Nero? That's not nice. Inuyasha is a friend you have to behave around him."

The dragon growled, turning away from her.

Kagome huffed. "Just wait when I'm able to move properly. I'll teach you to listen to me."

"However," the monk continued, "I have to say I'm also a bit worried about those lessons with Sesshoumaru. Are you certain you're safe around him?"

The miko sighed, stood up and limped back to the mat where she woke up. She fell on it with obvious relief. She closed her eyes for a moment before replying. "I think that since Sesshoumaru didn't kill me until now, I can say I'm safe around him."

"You sure?" said Sango.

"Nope, not at all, but I think Sesshoumaru isn't someone who would waste his time with helping me and saving my life from that bear, just to kill me later." Kagome sat up, sending bright smile to her friend. "You know, Sango, I hope that if I don't get on his nerves too much he would continue to indulge me."

The slayer sat next to her, hugging her friend. "Well, you're really amazing Kagome."

"Thanks Sanâ€œ" the miko stopped hearing loud growl coming from her stomach. The poor girl blushed, hiding her face in her hands.

Sango laughed. "We can talk later, now we should eat, or Kagome might become a hungry dragon herself and eat us."

"Hey!"

Sesshoumaru leaned on a tree, looking at the setting sun. The gentle wave of wind brought scents from the village to his nose. He catalogued each of them until he found the one he was looking for. The miko was on her way to him and should arrive any minute now. To think that if not for him, the girl would have been already dead.

The youkai lord growled under his breath. That foolish woman almost got herself killed by such a weak bear, and of course, the hanyou was too busy flipping his sword around to take care of his enemy. Good thing he was near enough to smell the girl's blood in the air.

However, it didn't change the fact that this situation was unthinkable, and once again he had to step in.

"Lady Kagome!" Rin said, running to the limping miko who just climbed on the hill he chose to camp on.

"Hello Rin, good evening Sesshoumaru," the woman said, waving her hand. He ignored the gesture, looking at the dragon following his owner. The reptile looked as cheerful as ever, his steps held that strange bounce typical for him, but Sesshoumaru saw the way he kept close to the miko, seeking contact with her.

If he had any doubts about his decision, that sight was enough to erase them. Without wasting time, he walked to the miko who was busy chatting with his ward. He would never say it aloud, but he was amazed how fast the two of them got attached to each other.

When he was close enough, the girls looked up at him. The miko smiled. "I was saying Rin that Shippou was very tired since he didn't sleep for the last two days, so he didn't come. Now I'll tell her story, and we can begin the training if that's okay with you," she said.

"No miko, we won't be training today. Rin, go find Jaken."

"Yes lord Sesshoumaru!" the child said, before running away.

Kagome frowned a bit, watching her disappearing form. "What is it that you don't want to say before Rin? You're not going to kill me, right?"

"Ridiculous."

"I hoped so. So what do you want to tell me?"

The man frowned. "Miko, you'll join this Sesshoumaru's group."

Kagome blinked. "What? If you're trying to be funny I'm sorry to tell you, but you are not."

"Miko."

"Look, I won't leave my friends."

Sesshoumaru waved his hand. "You may take the fox with you."

"Why thank you, but I'm not going to leave Inuyasha, or Sango, or Miroku. My answer is no. I won't join you, but thank you for the offer."

Sesshoumaru scowled, but the miko held her ground. The daiyoukai decided it was necessary to speak up. "Miko, it wasn't an offer. It's a fact. You'll join this Sesshoumaru's group."

"Or what?" Kagome said, putting a hand on her hip. Sesshoumaru didn't know her that well, but he knew enough to recognize that sign. Her stubborn side was once again in action. Whatever he would say now, she wouldn't listen.

For a moment, he thought about ignoring her annoyance, throwing her on his shoulder and carrying her away, but he knew it wasn't worth

the troubles. Inuyasha and the rest of those pitiful creatures she called friends would come after him no matter where he would go. He wouldn't risk his peace, not for this crazy miko for sure.

It meant he would have to do it another way. He almost sighed. He hoped it wouldn't come to that. What he was about to do was humiliating, and the only consolation came from the fact he would get on Inuyasha nerves. Riling the boy up was always quite enjoyable.

"Very well miko, if you refuse then this Sesshoumaru would travel with you."

"W-what?"

At this moment, Sesshoumaru decided annoying Inuyasha wasn't worth it. Maybe he would just kill the miko once she would be no longer useful. Yes, that might be satisfying, if only it didn't mean all the time invested in her training would be wasted. As sad as it was, it seemed there would be nothing to make his sacrifice more bearable.

He looked at the miko who stared at him with open mouth. That expression made her look quite stupid. "Hnn," he said.

The woman gulped. "You're joking. You must. Do you know what Inuyasha would think or say when you join us? He's already suspicious because he got that crazy idea that youâ€| I mean weâ€| are having some kind of relationships."

"It only proves that hanyou's stupidity knows no boundaries."

Kagome groaned, shaking her head. "At least, let me tell him that. It would sound better coming from me."

"Hnn. You're not good at delivering messages on time."

Kagome blushed, closing her eyes in misery. "I know, but it was only one time."

"This Sesshoumaru would deliver the message himself. You might follow me if you wish to witness the scene."

Before Kagome could reply, he was already walking away. Huffing, she followed him in her turtle speed, with confused dragon trailing right behind her.

When they neared the village, Sesshoumaru heard first curse coming from his half brother and a smirk rose on his lips. In the end, maybe angering Inuyasha was all he needed.

9. Chapter 9

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CHAPTER 9

"Inuyasha, please, calm down, you're only making it all worse!" said Kagome, doing her best to hold back her friend, thus stopping him from killing his brother. The boy growled, his hands tightening on his sword while throwing curses at Sesshoumaru. The daiyoukai didn't seem bothered by them, even, what worried Kagome the most, he seemed quite amused.

"I'll kill him, so I don't have to watch his smug face anymore! Let me go Kagome!" the boy said, trying to push the miko away. However, since he was worried about her injuries, it didn't have enough strength to move her away.

The miko sighed. "Inuyasha, please, Sesshoumaru said he is going to travel with us, nothing more. Why do you have to exaggerate it?"

"What?! He's trying to drag you on his side! I won't let him! You hear me wench?!"

Kagome sighed, before leaning away. "Inuyasha sit."

The boy hit the ground. "Fuck! I should kill you too! You're even worse than him!"

The miko shook her head over the boy's immobilized body. Since she was standing for quite long time, she decided to sit down. When she did that, she patted Inuyasha's head. His puppy ears twitched in annoyance.

"Look, I-I think Sesshoumaru is really trying to help us, or rather Nero. I don't think he's doing it just to annoy you." Though he's enjoying it way too much, she added in her thoughts.

With a huff, Inuyasha scrambled off the ground, shooting angered glare at her then at his half brother. "Just wait asshole! I'll kill you when she won't look!" he yelled, waving his fist in Sesshoumaru's direction.

The older man arched his eyebrow. "It would be my pleasure to see your pitiful tries, hanyou."

"See?" Inuyasha said, looking back at Kagome, "he's evil."

The woman groaned. "I know."

"Keh!" the boy said, turning on his heel and running in the direction of the forest.

Kagome bit her lip, looking after his retreating red form. When he disappeared, she turned to the daiyoukai. "There, are you happy?"

"Hnn."

The miko closed her eyes. "Okay, translation. 'Yes, I'm happy because I love annoying the hell out of my younger brother'."

The daiyoukai blinked. "Hnn."

"Right," said Kagome, trying to imitate Sesshoumaru's voice,

"half-brother."

The man frowned. "Miko, you speak too freely."

Knowing warning, when she heard one Kagome just sighed, trying to stand up. With immobile leg, it turned out to be more difficult than she thought it would be. After third failed attempt she was about to cry for help, when she felt a strong hand pulling her up. Startled she looked up, to Sesshoumaru's golden eyes.

She gasped almost losing her balance. It was a good thing the youkai was still holding her. Kagome blushed under his gaze.

"T-thanks."

"Hnn. Weak human."

The girl didn't know why, but, after hearing his reply, she started to laugh. The daiyoukai frowned at her strange behavior, which only made her laugh more, small tears streamed down her cheeks.

"Miko if you lost your senses inform me about it."

The girl shook her head, brushing the tears away. "Sorry, I'm fine. It's justâ€ if only Inuyasha could hear you a moment ago. Maybe he would understand I'm not turning my back on him."

"Hnn."

The woman giggled again, when Sesshoumaru released her, and with quick, disapproving glance walked away. Kagome watched his back for some time before sighing. Hearing this Nero, who until now was only a silent observer, growled in question.

The miko offered him a weak smile. "I just hope tomorrow Inuyasha would see everything in a different light," she said. With a shake of her head, she turned around. "Come Nero, time to get some rest."

The miko and her dragon walked back to the village.

Unfortunately, the next day didn't bring changes Kagome expected. Looking at the fuming Inuyasha, she decided it was even worse than the day before. The girl waved her hand trying to get Inuyasha's attention, but he was too busy arguing with Kaede even to notice her.

The girl resigned herself to be yet another observer of the unleashing drama.

"Inuyasha it's too dangerous for Kagome to ride on yer back. You can worsen her injuries, especially her leg," said Kaede.

"But it's safe to ride on this bastard's beast! You're siding with him, don't you old hag?"

"Oh Inuyasha calm down and stop taking everything as an act of betrayal!" Kagome said, limping to his side. "Kaede is just worried, besides I would only be a problem for you. If we were attacked, I wouldn't be able to get of your back like usual."

Inuyasha blushed. "I would be able to protect you anyway."

"I know, but I don't want to be a problem. Since Miroku and Sango are riding on Kirara, it would be the best choice for all of us if I ride on Ah-Un. Think about it, for once I won't be slowing you down!" the girl said, smiling. From her backpack peeked black head and growled at the boy.

Inuyasha growled in return. "If not for my bastard brother and that thing this all wouldn't be happening!" he said turning around and crossing his hands over his chest.

The miko didn't reply knowing that whatever she chose to say, Inuyasha wouldn't believe her.

"We should go," Miroku said, breaking the tension.

Without a word, the boy jumped away, disappearing between trees. The monk shook his head at such behavior, patting Kagome's back. She smiled her thanks, before limping to the two-headed dragon, where were sitting Shippou and Rin.

"Why Lord Inuyasha is angry Lady Kagome?"

"Cause his jealous," said Shippou.

"About what?" said Rin, blinking.

Kagome patted the children's heads. "He's not jealous, he's confused, but it will pass. He just needs to get accustomed to the new situation. He's getting angry to hide it."

The girl smiled. "Rin understands! Rin would make Lord Inuyasha a flower crown to make him like Rin!"

"Yeah, as if that would work," Shippou commented, bursting into a laugh. Seeing Rin's sad expression, Kagome silenced the boy with a sharp look.

"I think it's a lovely idea Rin. Now we should get going before he gets even more annoyed," Kagome said while trying to think of a way, how to get on Ah-Un's back.

"Need help?" Sango said.

"Yes, please."

The slayer smiled, helping her friend to get on the dragon.

"It's so annoying. I'm always the bother," the miko murmured blushing.

Sango laughed. "I don't think so Kagome. By the way, where's Lord Sesshoumaru? I hadn't seen him since the morning when he told you to ride on his dragon."

Kagome frowned. "Now that you mentioned it, I have no idea. Though I suppose he's still somewhere close, I can feel his youki."

The slayer shrugged. "Then he's probably avoiding our company. It's for the better I guess. Well, off we go. Kirara, Miroku, let's get

going."

The group waved for the last time to Kaede before leaving the village. As they were passing through the forest, Inuyasha joined them. His face told Kagome that he didn't calm down, so she didn't even try to strike a conversation. Crossing her fingers for at least peaceful evening, she turned to the children who were more than eager to spend the travel on talking.

The evening proved that Kagome didn't have much luck when it came to wishes. Inuyasha was sulking on the tree without even looking in her direction. In the end, the girl decided she needed to use her magical trick on him. With the most serene expression she could muster, she looked up at him.

"Inuyasha! Come down, and I'll give you ramen!"

The ears on top of the boy's head twitched.

Kagome knew she had his attention. "Yep, yummy and hot ramen. In addition, it's your favorite flavor!"

"Keh!"

Kagome shrugged. "Fine, if you don't want it I'll give it to Nero, he didn't eat yet. I'm sure he would like it."

"Hell no!" Inuyasha called before jumping off the tree, grabbing the soup from her hand, before sitting down under the tree and slurping his favorite dish. The miko smiled in victory at the small progress, before returning to the conversation she had with Sango and Miroku. Moments later, Sesshoumaru walked to the camp.

"Miko," he said, "time for training."

Kagome's face brightened. "Sure! Come Nero," she called, scrambling to her feet with the help of her walking stick.

The daiyoukai looked at the cane with distaste. "You won't get to the clearing with this," he said.

Kagome frowned. "Without it, I won't get anywhere at all."

"Hnn."

"Yes, hnn. So what are we going to do about this?"

"Stay here, as long as yourâ€|" the daiyoukai's golden eyes swept over the people gathered around the fire.

The girl frowned, rolling her eyes at him. "Friends," she said in a firm tone, "those people are my friends. You should remember that term. Who knows maybe it will come in handy one day?"

The man's eyebrow drew together. "Indeed. Very well, the training can take place here, as long as your 'friends' won't interrupt in it."

"Don't worry about that. So what are we going to do?"

The man looked at the dragon rolling over the ground. "Hnn. He should practice flying, but first made him stretch his wings and jump few times. He could strain his muscles since he had long break from exercises."

The woman nodded, looking down at Nero. He was making adorable noises while playing in the dirt. The miko giggled catching his attention. "Time to hunt some fireflies Nero, try to catch those who fly the highest."

The dragon purred running to the near bushes. In a moment, he caused there some chaos frightening all insects hiding inside. The dragon gave them few seconds before jumping up, trying to catch some of them. Kagome watched him until she saw Sesshoumaru's nod.

"Nero you can finish for now. Come here."

The reptile shook his head, looking for a moment, at the flying insects, before running to his owner. When he reached her, he started to bounce around her legs.

The miko laughed. "Okay, okay. Open your wings. Yes, that's it, now move them up and down slowly. Yes, now one at the time. Good!" She looked back at the daiyoukai who nodded his approval. The miko smiled, leaning on her cane, before extending her hand. In her palm formed shining energy ball. "Try to reach it."

Nero rolled over the ground before getting into a starting position. His eyes focused on the shinning object. His little legs pushed from the ground, his wings beat the air. Kagome squealed in delight when she felt his nose touching her hand. "Good, good," she commented, "stay like that for some time."

The reptile did as told, before landing down a minute later. The daiyoukai nodded. "He needs more training. First teach him, how to fly in a straight line."

"Ermâ€| sureâ€| any suggestion how should I do it?"

Kagome was sure that if Sesshoumaru wasn't hiding his emotions so well, he would roll his eyes. However, since he would never do anything so undignified, he just scowled at her. The miko blushed, offering her sweetest smile. "Please?" She said.

"Hnn, use that orb of yours while walking. Make him follow you."

The girl laughed, poking her forehead. "Of course! How silly of me not to think of that!"

"Hnn."

Kagome laughed again, looking at her dragon. "Let's go Nero before Sesshoumaru decides he doesn't feel like indulging us anymore," she said, limping away as fast as she could. The people who observed the scene from the side chuckled at the exchange. Inuyasha started to bit his noodles with more strength than was necessary.

When the miko decided she was at a safe distance, she created another orb in her hand. "You heard what the youkai lord said right?" The

dragon nodded in reply, not trying to hide his excitement. The girl smiled. "So, you know what to do. Let's try it!"

The blue-eyed woman created another orb in her hand. Seeing this, the dragon jumped up, flapping his wings. Kagome waited until the reptile touched her hand, and when he did that, the girl nodded. "Good, now follow me," she said.

She started to walk backward, but it wasn't such an easy task while leaning on a wooden stick. Her slow moves didn't also fit the dragon who started to descend to the ground. Trying to improve Kagome started to walk faster, which caused her to place feet in a wrong way, and being the graceful creature she was, she soon ended on the ground. Seeing this Inuyasha crushed the cup, he was holding. The rest of the ramen dripped over his hand.

Nero landed next to his owner, nuzzling her face in question. "I'm fine," Kagome said, patting his head, before sitting up. She looked at Sesshoumaru. "I'm afraid it won't work."

The daiyoukai snapped his fingers, calling for Ah-Un. The beast walked right to the fallen girl, helping her to stand up. Once she was standing firm on the ground, Kagome ruffled the mane on the dragon's heads.

"Sit on his back, miko. It would allow you to move around," Sesshoumaru said.

"Oh, okay. Good idea," said Kagome, wondering how she would manage to get on Ah-Un's back. This problem was soon resolved when Sesshoumaru ordered the dragon to bend down, so the miko could jump on him. In thanks, she gifted the daiyoukai with a bright smile.

Inuyasha growled, throwing the remains of the cup away, jumping on the tree's bench, crossing his arms and looking away.

Unaware girl created another purifying orb, urging Nero to fly. When the black dragon did that, she turned to Ah-Un and asked him to walk around the clearing. The two-headed creature chose the right speed, from time to time checking if Nero followed.

After few rounds, the trio stopped and Nero landed on the ground panting for breath. Ah-Un bent down allowing the miko to slide from his back. She patted Nero's head in praise. "It was good. We just need to practice it more."

"Hnn. Miko, your attachment is making you blind. It was far from good."

The girl rolled her eyes. "It was his first attempt, be gentle. I know he didn't fly in a straight line, but hey, it could have been worse. I would say that, for the beginner, it was good."

"Hnn."

The girl waved her hand. "Look I support positive motivation. It doesn't mean I don't see mine, or his flaws, right Nero? We need much more practice before we would be perfect, right?"

The dragon nodded his head, wiggling his tail to the sides.

"See?" beamed the miko. "Don't worry we won't settle for anything less than perfection."

"Hnn. Try again."

Kagome saluted. "Ay, ay. Let's go Nero," she said, turning back to Ah-Un. "Could you perhaps bend down?" she asked the reptile after few failed attempts to get up. The dragon shook his head, too interested in the grass under his legs.

The daiyoukai huffed dropping the miko on the dragon's back. She blushed, causing Inuyasha to growl at the exchange. The training continued for some time until both miko and the dragon started yawning.

With not so gentle remark about human weakness, Sesshoumaru agreed to finish exercises for tonight. The miko smiled, leaving Nero so he could eat his dinner while she went back to her friends.

Sango smiled, unable to stay silent any longer. "I have never seen anything so exciting. It's a pity I couldn't witness your previous trainings. I don't think I know any other slayer who saw something like this."

Kagome smiled, before covering her yawn. "I'm glad you liked it. Well, I'm beat. You wouldn't mind if I go to sleep, would you?"

The slayer shook her head. "No problem. I think your dragon is sleepy too." To prove her point, Nero nudged her arm. Kagome smiled, standing up and limping to her sleeping bag. The dragon followed her jumping inside her backpack and curling into a ball. Kagome patted his head, before looking for one missing person.

"Shippou, shouldn't you go to sleep as well?"

The boy looked at her then at Rin.

The miko laughed. "As a matter of fact you both should rest now. You know if you go to sleep earlier, then tomorrow you'll wake up earlier and have more time to spend together."

The children looked at each other before they said a quick goodbye's and ran to their beds. Kagome shook her head, feeling how the little fox slid next to her. She kissed the top of his head, ruffling his hair. "Good choice. You'll have a lot of time to talk tomorrow."

"I like her," the boy whispered, blushing like a tomato.

Kagome giggled. "I know, and you know what, she likes you too."

"You think so?"

"Yeah. Now sleep."

Shippou closed his eyes, tucking his head under her chin. Kagome smiled again, closing her own eyes and falling asleep. Doing this, she missed the way Inuyasha kept growling at his older brother for the rest of the night. However, she couldn't miss his annoyance when she woke up the next day.

"Inuyasha, what's wrong with you today?" she asked, once the boy refused to reply to her greeting.

"Keh, the air makes me sick."

The miko blinked sniffing the air. "I don't understand," she said, looking at him with confusion.

The hanyou growled. "The bastard's stench makes its hard to breath. You stink of him too."

"In our family you're the only bastard Inuyasha," commented Sesshoumaru passing him and walking into the forest.

The inhabitants of the camp went silent, seeing how the boy's face took color resembling his clothes.

The young man's hand caught the hilt of Tetsusaiga, but Kagome covered his hand, catching his attention. "Stop it Inuyasha, it's not a good idea."

"You're protecting him, right? You're siding with him."

The miko sighed. "No, Inuyasha. I want you to calm down, and be able to enjoy the day, without being paranoid about Sesshoumaru's presence. He's here to help Nero, not to annoy you. Try to be cool about this, please."

The boy growled. "You say I should let the fucker treat me like this?"

The miko bit her lip. Inuyasha's scowl deepened.

Kagome sighed. "I'm not saying it's fair, but we can't do anything about this. That's why you should try to get over his insults. Please, for your own sake."

The hanyou growled, pushing the girl's hand away. "You're so annoying wench," he said walking away. Kagome followed him with her eyes, wondering if she was doing the right thing with trying to pacify him.

A pat on her shoulder pulled her from her thoughts, and she turned around to see Miroku with his usual gentle smile. "It would be fine Lady Kagome. He just needs some time for adjustment."

"I hope so. It would be easier, however if Sesshoumaru stopped insulting him."

The monk beamed, wagging his eyebrows at her. "Maybe he would if you ask him very nicely."

The miko frowned. "Ha ha very funny. As if he would listen to what I say."

Miroku chuckled. "You never know my dearest Lady Kagome, maybe you match his taste in women."

The miko scowled, but a faint blush crept on her face. "If

Sesshoumaru is somewhere he can hear you, then he would cut your head once he returns."

Miroku paled, and Kagome chose that moment to flee from his presence, instead choosing to sit with Sango and the children. They all ate breakfast in a pleasant atmosphere, waiting for Inuyasha's return.

Once he was back, and the group was complete, save for Sesshoumaru, they moved to their everyday search routine. It was almost normal, but the group could feel the tension sparkling, every time Inuyasha looked to the side where Kagome was riding on Ah-Un. His mood only worsened through the day, and the evening training made him angry enough to refuse even looking at them.

This kind of Inuyasha's behavior continued for the next three days, only getting more intense with every passing moment. The group knew it was a ticking bomb waiting for the chance to explode. Kagome dreaded it, still searching for some way to stop it before it was too late, not willing to admit, even to herself that she was fighting a lost battle.

The evening exercise with Nero was the only moment she found her reprise. The reptile was still practicing flying in a straight line and was getting better with each try.

"That's right!" cheered Kagome, while her dragon flew to her. "You're doing the right thing. Yes! No, no, no, you're getting off the way, back to the line, before you get carried away!" yes, good job!"

With triumphant growl, Nero landed before her feet. The woman smiled patting his head in praise. "Wonderful, now try to fly to the tree and then to Sesshoumaru. Remember measured speed and even high."

The reptile nodded spreading his wings and jumping into the air. Kagome watched how he tried to follow her guidance. This time it was more difficult since he was flying against the wind, which was rather vicious the whole day. Nero, however, wasn't one to give up, moving his wings twice as fast as he flew in the pointed direction.

Meanwhile, Inuyasha decided to get off the tree to eat his beloved ramen for dinner.

The reptile touched the tree and Kagome clapped her hands. "That's my boy! Now fly to Sesshoumaru."

The dragon nodded, flying to the silent lord. The man's golden eyes followed him as he tried to make his way, fighting with the wind the whole time. Out of sudden, the wind changed its direction, pulling up many things in the camp and creating disorder.

Kagome gasped, surprised at the wind's strength while trying to hold her short skirt in its place. Another burst of wind, followed by a surprised roar, caused the miko to forget about modesty as she looked for the source of the sound. She managed to locate Nero flying past her friends before slamming right into Inuyasha and spilling the soup on both of them.

"Oh Kami," the girl muttered, knowing it was the last drop in the bucket. As fast as she could move with the help of the crutch, she walked in the boy's direction. "Inuyasha I'm sorry, it was an accident. Are you both alright?"

The hanyou shot her hateful gaze before standing up, catching the dragon and throwing him back at her.

Surprised by the violence, the girl managed to catch Nero in the last moment, by abounding her stick. After a quick inspection about the dragon's state, she looked back at her silver-haired friend. "It was unnecessary. I'm sorry about the accident, but it was just it - an accident. You don't have to be so angry."

Inuyasha shook the remains of his dinner of him, rounding to her with light speed. "I'm done, you hear me wench?! I have enough of this. Either you throw Mr. Fucker, and that thing out, or I'll kill them with my bare hands!"

"Inuyasha calm down friend," said Miroku, standing up and walking to them. "Let's solve the problem with calm and peaceful hearts."

"Fuck of monk!" Inuyasha said, looking back at the young miko. "I'm serious Kagome, it's either two of them," he said pointing at Sesshoumaru and Nero, "or me."

Kagome gasped, tucking the dragon close to her chest while Sango gasped in outrage at the hanyou. She walked to the girl embracing her shaking shoulders. "How dare you make her choose Inuyasha! You have no right to do that!"

"I have every fucking right to do so."

"First you should choose between Kikyou and Kagome to do so. At least she's not two-timing on you."

Inuyasha's face turned red. "She's not? You think I'm blind? I see how she's flirting with that bastard!" he growled, looking at his older brother.

The gathered people blinked in surprise, but only Kagome managed to voice everyone's thoughts. "Are out of your mind?" she said.

In the background, Sesshoumaru nodded his head.

"Hell no! You think I didn't see those blushes? Smiles? Hearts in your eyes? You call me two-timer while you're practically fucking my half-brother before my eyes! And he's not even denying it!"

"This Sesshoumaru would never lower himself to touch weak human, especially not a miko."

"Lies! You're all liars," Inuyasha said, bowing his head.

Miroku walked closer, noticing how the boy was shaking with anger. "My friend, let's take a walk and calm down."

The hanyou jumped away. When he looked up everyone could see that his eyes were red, and there was faint outline of the stripes on his cheeks. The young man growled. "I'm telling you, get rid of those

two, or I'll kill them when I come back." With that, he jumped further into the forest and disappeared from their sight.

Kagome blinked, looking at her friends in confusion. "W-what was that about?"

Miroku ran his hand through his hair, sighing. "I think our friend is simply jealous," he said, looking at the stoic youkai lord, then at the young miko.

The girl blushed a bit. "B-but that's so stupid, and what about the other things he said? Do you think he was serious? I can't leave Nero! I won't," she said in a soft voice, but everyone heard determination lacing it.

Sango nodded patting the reptile's head. "Don't worry Kagome, I think this matter can be settle peacefully once he returns. Don't worry, we're on your side."

The girl laid her head, on the dragon's head. "Thank you, guys."

Meanwhile, miles away, a man watched through the mirror how Inuyasha walked through the forest, swinging his sword around and cutting bushes and trees on his way.

On the male's face rose a cruel smile. "Interesting, truly interesting."

10. Chapter 10

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CHAPTER 10

After Inuyasha's retreat, the whole camp was silent for a long time, everyone was busy thinking about the hanyou's threat. Later Kagome tried to lighten the mood, pulling her friends into the conversation, but the group knew she wasn't as bright as she tried to act. After another tense hour, Miroku sighed. "Let's get some rest. New day would provide us with lighter moods and clearer minds."

His proposition was taken to heart, and in next twenty minutes everyone was tucked in and asleep. 'Well, almost all,' thought Kagome, looking with slight jealousy at Nero and Shippou who snored curled to her side. If only she could fall asleepâ€!

With a sigh, the girl rolled to her back, looking at the starry sky. Every other day she would be happy to have a quiet moment like this, when no sound interrupted her thoughts, but today this silence was rather a curse than a blessing. There was nothing to stop her mind from wandering to what occurred earlier.

"Inuyasha," she whispered, noticing that this name never sounded so heavy coming from her lips. She understood his disdain for Sesshoumaru. The brothers always had complicated relationships, and she was sure on Inuyasha's place she would behave the same

way.

However, Inuyasha's behavior toward Nero was a very different matter. There was no way she could ignore his hate for the reptile. Of course, she was to some extent responsible for this since she didn't tell him earlier, butâ€!

The girl bit her lip. Maybe, it all was happening for all different reason. After all, Inuyasha was rather possessive about her, and she might have made it worse when she promised him to stay with him. Perhaps the whole situation was an eye-opener. It might be the right time to show Inuyasha that, though she promised to stay with him, it didn't give him right to think about her as his possession.

A single tear slid down Kagome's cheek. Releasing herself from Inuyasha would also mean she had to let him go. No matter how long she thought about it, it still did hurt, but for once, she knew it was the right decision. The last weeks proved their relationships took a wrong course, and it was the last moment to stop the upcoming disaster.

With another sigh, Kagome rolled to the side, and her eyes fell on Sesshoumaru who was looking right back at her. Feeling the weight of his gaze, the young miko blushed before she sat up and taking her crutch walked to his side.

"Can we talk?" she said.

The daiyoukai said nothing, instead snorting and looking away. Not sure, whatever it meant yes or not, the girl shrugged and chose the option that was favorable for her. Trying to be delicate for her hurt leg, she arranged herself next to the silent man. She looked at him, but he was still turned away. This made her giggle a bit. "If you didn't want to talk with me, you should have said so. Now you had to indulge me."

"I can always kill you miko."

Kagome giggled again, though the sound was more nervous than before. "Wouldn't that be waste of your time?"

"Hnn."

"I won't say I'm not relieved. Soâ€! can we talk? I mean we are talking, but if I ask you something would you answer that?"

Sesshoumaru said nothing.

The girl snorted. "Okay, be that way. I am going to talk anyway." When after a moment there was no response, Kagome shrugged and continued. "Well, first I'm sorry for Inuyasha. I mean I don't know from where gets such crazy ideas like the one that I'm falling in love with you. That's just laughable."

To her surprise, Sesshoumaru made some sound that she assumed was agreement.

Hiding her smile behind her hand, she started to speak again. "Anyway, I didn't have time before, but there're some things I would

like to ask you about Nero. For example, why did you say you would cut his wings if he didn't learn to fly? Did you want to force me to work harder?"

"No," Sesshoumaru said, looking up at the clear sky, "it's a common practice. The dragon has a certain amount of time to learn how to fly using his wings. If he's unable to master this skill his wings are cut, and he learns how to do so basing on his youki."

The miko bit her lip, looking at the sleeping two-headed reptile curled around Sesshoumaru's young charge. Her eyes seemed to sadden somewhat. "Is it the reason why Ah-Unâ€!"

"No," Sesshoumaru interrupted, "He's a lowland breed. They don't possess wings."

"Oh," the girl breathed, a relieved smile blooming on her lips, "but I still don't understand. Even if he doesn't learn how to use it, why do you have to cut wings?"

"It can be cause of death."

The miko shoot him annoyed glare. Sesshoumaru arched his eyebrow.

When his silence continued to stretch in time the miko hissed. "Care to explain?"

"Hnn."

The girl groaned. "Please?"

"Since they remain unused the wings tend to degenerate in the most disgusting way, which often leads to blood infection and the dragon's death."

The miko's eyes widened. "It's a good thing Nero learnt to use them, then," she said, tapping her chin, her eyes moved to the dragon cuddling to Shippou on her sleeping bag. The youkai leaned on the tree.

They sat in silence for a moment before the girl once again turned to him. "Umm," she said, "another thing how is it possible my friends didn't found out about Nero earlier? I mean he slept all the time I was with them and never woke up. And he was asleep before we came back from the training. Now that I think about it seems a littleâ€! abnormal."

The man shrugged. "Dragons sleep a lot, and they're heavy sleepers."

"Well, I know about that, but still it's a lot of sleep," Kagome said, waving her hands to add a little more dramatic measure.

Not even one muscle on Sesshoumaru's face twitched, but she was once again graced with a reply. "Young reptiles spend whole days sleeping. The mothers wake them only for feeding. The training we give them makes them stronger, but exerts energy they're not used to use. That's why once it's over they fall asleep and don't wake until the next session."

"Wow, I didn't know. There's so much I should learn," Kagome said, before hiding a yawn.

The youkai Lord snorted. "Your mortality is taking hold of you miko. You should rest."

The girl beamed at him, pushing her wild hair behind her ear. "Yeah, I probably should. It was a stressful day. Even Miroku fell asleep, though he planned to guard the camp," she laughed a bit looking at the sleeping monk, who was mumbling something about bearing his children. "Oh well, I guess if there was a true need he would wake up immediately."

"Hnn."

Yawning, Kagome closed her eyes concentrating on her inner power then called it forth, before spreading it around their camp and the surrounding it woods. When she called it back, and opened her eyes, she noticed Sesshoumaru was once again staring at her. The girl blushed, not comfortable with such attention. "Is something wrong?"

"You said you're not able to control your power."

Kagome blinked, before understanding dawned on her. "You mean this trick?" the girl shrugged. "It's something Miroku taught me some time ago. He said that it would help to find me if I get lost, and it should ward off some dangers. I mastered it quite well, but I wouldn't go so far as to say I'm able to control my powers. Well, off I go," Kagome said trying to stand up. However, her hurt leg was making it rather difficult.

Before the miko could curse her fate, Sesshoumaru caught her arm, and stood up helping her into a standing position. Kagome smiled. "Thank you. Again."

"Hnn."

The girl walked to her sleeping bag, before looking back at the youkai Lord. "And thank you for protecting us."

Sesshoumaru arched his eyebrow.

"I could feel your power spread over the whole forest. I don't think anyone would decide to attack us after feeling it." Sesshoumaru opened his lips to reply, but Kagome cut in, waving her hand. "Even if it isn't for us, we're still protected by you. It deserves our thanks."

Sesshoumaru shrugged, before sitting back under his tree and looking up at the sky. Kagome smiled, looking at him for a moment before laying down and curling around Shippou and Nero, fell asleep.

#

Inuyasha ran through the silent forest, growling from time to time. His hand was fisted over Tetsusaiga's hilt, swinging it around and destroying the forest's plants. Rage swirled in his eyes as he looked

around.

It looked as if from all sides was observing him golden eyes. Eyes that resembled eyes of his half-brother, or eyes of the dragon.

"Those bastards!" the young man growled, cutting a nearby tree. It was all their fault. His life was perfect before they came into a picture and clouded his Kagome's mind.

'Your Kagome?' asked his conscience.

"Damn straight!" the boy yelled. "Kagome's mine!"

'Then what about Kikyou?'

Inuyasha stopped millimeters from cutting some bush, his gaze absent as he thought about that. Kagome was his there was no denying to it, but Kikyouâ€œ it was a different matter with Kikyou. She was his too, and he was hers. He assured her about that many times.

'Then how can you claim Kagome is yours if you'll never be hers?' the quite voice in his head continued to ask.

The hanyou growled squishing the voice, and pushing away the twinge of guilt it produced. Kagome was his - it was all that mattered. That also led to the conclusion that she had no business even looking at his bastard brother, and not with such an admiration. He could almost see hearts fluttering around those two whenever they were close. Kagome shouldn't be doing this!

Yet she was doing it, and more, she was talking to that bastard and smiling. Those special, beaming smiles that should be reserved only for him. Him! Not for that asshole!

Of course, all of this wouldn't be happening now, if not for that good for nothing dragon. It was its fault Kagome was spending time with Sesshoumaru. It was its fault that bastard joined their group, and it was its fault that he, Inuyasha, was here right now and not with his friends enjoying pleasant evening.

It would be better if that thing was never born, or if Kagome threw it away. It would solve the conflict they had, and since that thing would be gone, there would be no reason for Sesshoumaru to stick with them. He would kill two birds with one stone.

'Kagome would be angry if you hurt the dragon.'

"Keh!" Inuyasha huffed, cutting another tree, "She'll get over that thing. She always forgives me. Always."

'There are things even she wouldn't forgive.'

The boy huffed, but didn't try to deny the truth behind that. Kagome was the most forgiving person, but he saw the way she protected the dragon. It was the same way she held Shippou whenever he got angry at the little fox. If he decided to hurt the dragon, it would be as if he touched Shippou. He doubted she would ever forgive him if he hurt any of them.

With a defeated sigh, the boy slumped on the ground, Tetsusaiga transformed back to its less impressive form. There was no way out of this. As much as he wanted to get rid of Sesshoumaru and the dragon, he knew he wouldn't be able to do it.

Kagome would never let him hurt the dragon, and Sesshoumaruâ€| well, since the moment he managed to cut Sesshoumaru's arm, and discovered how to use Wind Scars he didn't come closer to hurting the bastard.

"It sucks," Inuyasha said, bending his knee and leaning on it. Everything was just wrong. So wrong, and he was so helpless, there was no strength in him to change it. Growling he hit back of his head on the tree, hoping beyond hope that it would clear his mind.

Two hours after sunrise, Inuyasha decided to return to his friends. He had managed to calm down and think over the whole situation. Though he was still unhappy with his brother's presence, there was no escaping it. Once the whole 'dragon training' thing would be over, he would just kill Sesshoumaru. Until then, he would act like Kagome asked him to, and ignore the youkai.

On the other hand, the dragon was positive addition for the group, even if he was as annoying as Shippou. The more powerful allies they had, the easier it would be to get rid of Naraku. Of course, the killing blow would belong to him, there was a reason he inherited Tetsusaiga.

Snorting, Inuyasha stood up and tucking his hands in his sleeves looked for a moment at the sun. It was time to return and make peace. Just as he made a first step in the direction of the camp the air around got thicker, and his nose was assaulted with a familiar scent.

Inuyasha whirled around, his hands held already transformed sword. "Naraku! Come out bastard!" he yelled, glaring around.

"Tsk, tskâ€| you must be Inuyasha. Naraku said I'll find you here," said a strange voice. Its owner walked out of the woods, looking at the growling hanyou with unimpressed expression. He was tall, with long pinkish hair pulled into a high ponytail and violet eyes.

"Who the hell are you? Another Naraku's wicked creation?"

The youkai huffed, raising his hand to inspect his claws. His simple dark kimono swished with his moves. "I am."

"Well, what do you want?!"

The youkai lowered his hand, before looking at Inuyasha and smirking. "I'm here to kill you."

"You can only dream," said Inuyasha. Without waiting, he jumped to his opponent, ready to strike. The strange youkai dodged the attack, his smirk never leaving his face.

"Naraku told me everything about you. Say Inuyasha, is that true? Naraku said the miko you protect betrayed you."

The boy's eyes flashed in red, but the color disappeared almost at

the same second. "Kikyou never betrayed me!" he said, moving his sword in an arc shape, hoping to slice the stranger in half. The other escaped the blow, jumping over Inuyasha's head.

"Kikyou? No, he didn't say Kikyou. I think he said she got tired with you and turned to your half-brother. I heard they bonded last night, right after you had left," Naraku's minion taunted.

For a second Inuyasha found it was hard to breathe. What the stranger said, no, it couldn't be true. Kagome would never betray him. "Liar!" he yelled, swinging Tetsusaiga over youkai's head. Few pink hair strands fell on the ground.

The man laughed. "Ah! I see it's true! Tell me, half-breed, how is it to be so easily replaced?"

"You tell me!" The boy growled, jumping into the air, before slamming the place the other youkai stood a moment ago. "You're the one who would be replaced once I kill you. Naraku wouldn't even bat an eye when you drop dead!"

The youkai's smile turned a little colder. "Foolish hanyou, love is weakness."

"No! Love gives you power beyond measure!" countered Inuyasha, remembering what Kagome told him once.

The youkai laughed harder. "Then you're double fool hanyou! Not only you chose love over power, you also let this 'love' slip through your fingers!"

Something snapped inside Inuyasha's heart. "Die!" he called, whirling out of sudden and cutting his opponent in half. Its body fell away, a cloud of dust erupting from inside and falling all over Inuyasha.

The boy coughed, trying to shake the dust of his clothes without much luck. Once the wind cleared the air, he poked the body with his foot, surprised to see it was made of clay. "Keh! Naraku's getting sloppy in his work," he said, with disgust.

Sheathing his sword, he turned around eager to return to his companions to make sure they were safe.

#

The morning found the group of the Shikon hunters in better moods. Since Inuyasha was absent, they decided to enjoy their free time. After eating breakfast, the children started to play tag, much to delight of both Nero and Kirara who often joined their game.

Kagome laughed looking at their antics, when Sango sat next to her. The miko smiled at her slayer friend. "I knew Shippou was playful child, but I don't think I saw him so happy before."

Sango smiled, looking for a brief moment at the playing group. "He didn't have companion his age."

"I think so too," the younger girl admitted with saddened expression.

Seeing this Sango patted her arm. "Don't think you didn't care enough for him Kagome. You did all you could to make Shippou happy. I think he looks up to you as if you were his mom."

Kagome laughed. "I hope not, I'm way too young and irresponsible to be a good mother figure. I'm rather the older sister type."

Sango frowned, looking at the children, then back at her friend before she shrugged. "If you say so, but I think you're good enough. After all, you manage to share your life between two worlds, between two families. I think it's pretty responsible."

Kagome felt tears in her eyes. "Thank you so much Sango," she said in a shaky voice. The slayer smiled punching her arm in a friendly way. Kagome laughed returning the gesture. The two girls started teasing each other, laughing all the time. Their laughter joined children's, creating beautiful symphony.

Kagome couldn't remember when she was so happy. Everyone on the clearing looked relaxed, even Sesshoumaru. If only Inuyasha returned and they could clear everything. Now that she thought about it, she should have done that earlier.

"Kagome are you still with me?"

The girl blinked, before looking back at Sango, before smiling. "I think so, but I admit I was spacing out. Did I miss a lot?"

The slayer giggled. "Yes, about two minutes of me calling your name."

The miko blushed, mumbling her apology much to Sango's amusement. The two started to joke again before they went silent instead watching how Miroku stood up and walked to Sesshoumaru. The monk sat next to the youkai lord, and though the girl's strained their ears to hear what the two were talking about, they couldn't hear anything.

Sango shook her head looking at her fiancÃ©e. "I just hope he wouldn't say anything stupid to get himself killed."

"I don't think you have to be worried," said Kagome looking at the monk and youkai. "Besides, though Sesshoumaru often said he can kill someone, somehow we're all alive, even Inuyasha though I'm quite certain he could have killed us many times."

"Maybe you're right, but it still feels awkward to have him with us."

The miko frowned. "Strange, but I don't think so. Maybe I got used to have him around on our dragon trainings."

"Right! I forgot about that. Well, you always had the gift to befriend the strangest people like us. I'm not surprised you added Sesshoumaru to that list," Sango said, tapping her chin.

Kagome punched her arm. "Strangest people? Are you counting yourself into that?"

The woman blinked. "Sure! Even in my village I was one of three girls

who decided to become slayers. I mean, we all were trained, but only our trio was doing this as our work instead of getting married. So yes, I think I am a little strange."

"Aww Sango, you're not strange! You're amazing, and I'm sure Miroku thinks the same way."

"Well, he should."

"So, what?"

"Kagome!"

The girl looked to the side, just on time to see shivering Shippou jumping into her arms, followed by Nero. Once they were both in her arms she kissed their heads, but both the boy and the reptile were shaking. Kagome had exchanged worried glances with Sango before she looked to the side where Sesshoumaru told Jaken to escort Rin to safety.

Kagome looked back at the fox in her grasp. "Shippou tell me what's wrong?"

"N-Naraku."

"What?"

Sango stood up, running for her Hiraikotsu while Kagome scrambled to her feet, putting Shippou down since she wasn't able to hold him while walking with her crutch. The fox and the dragon followed behind her while she walked to her friends.

"Lady Kagome do you feel anything?" asked Miroku, meeting her half-way.

"No. But Shippou says he can smell Naraku. Maybe it's one of his off springs?"

"No," said Sesshoumaru standing next to her, "it's Inuyasha, he's carrying Naraku's scent."

The group sighed in relief, though Kagome became worried. "Do you think he was in a battle? Maybe he's wounded."

"No," youkai Lord said again, his eyes narrowing as he looked at the surrounding forest. "However, Inuyasha is in his transformed form."

The group gasped. "But how's that possible? Tetsusaiga should prevent it," said Sango.

"I don't know, but I suppose we'll find out soon," Miroku replied.

"I should go to him. Maybe I'll manage to calm him down," said Kagome, taking a step in the direction of the forest, but Miroku caught her arm, shaking his head.

"It's most unwise, remember he's unpredictable in this state. He might even hurt you, and you're still hurt. Besides, he'll be here

any moment," he said.

Kagome scowled. "Inuyasha would neverâ€œ"

"He's here."

As if answering a call Inuyasha landed on the clearing, his bloody red eyes looked straight into Kagome's blue ones before he turned and glared at his half-brother, growling in warning.

In reply, Sesshoumaru snorted. "Half-breed," he said, only worsening the boy's mood.

"Inuyasha what happened?" called Kagome, trying to break the tension and find the reason of her friend's transformation.

He looked at her, his brows drew together, before snarling at her. The girl took a step back, sending lost look to her friends, but their expressions were as lost as hers. They had stood in silence for a moment before Inuyasha growled again, taking step in Kagome's direction. Seeing this Nero jumped before his owner, growling in return.

"Keh! So you made your choice!" the boy snarled, taking out his sword and transforming it. "And I promised you something. Now I'm going to fulfill it!"

Kagome understood what he meant in a second. "Sit!" she yelled, "Sit! Sit! Sit! Sit!"

The hanyou hit the ground, digging a deep hole. Miroku and Sango walked to the crater, keeping their senses on alert. When they peered inside the hanyou wasn't moving, but when Miroku was trying to place sutra on him, the boy jumped out landing right before the miko and her dragon.

"Inuyasha, please no!"

"Die reptile!" the boy growled, swinging his sword and creating destructive wave of Wind Scars.

Kagome knew there was no way she could step out of the way of the attack, so she didn't even try. Nero jumped into her arms, and pain clenched her heart knowing she didn't have time to at least push him aside. In the last moment, she curled around him using her body as a shield.

However, before Wind Scars hit her she was taken from its way. She didn't need to guess who was her savior when silver hair covered her vision. Nero's happy gurgle only confirmed her suspicions. Holding the dragon, Kagome slackened in Sesshoumaru's grasp, trusting he would drop her in some safe place.

In the distance, she could see how Inuyasha turned to them, growling like crazy, before releasing another Wind Scars. Sesshoumaru leapt in the air again, avoiding another attack.

"Enough Inuyasha!" Miroku yelled.

'That's right,' thought Kagome, 'I can't cry now. I have to help

them, help him!" "Inuyasha sit!"

The boy hit the ground just as Hiraikotsu flew over his head. Sesshoumaru landed on the ground dropping her in the process. Kagome rolled to the side so she wouldn't squish Nero. When she did that, the dragon crawled from under her gasping for breath in a very dramatic way. Kagome scowled, but didn't have time to ponder over a fact that her dragon was teasing her. At least, not now.

Sudden gust of wind from Sesshoumaru's departure was a good proof. Screaming another string of sits, the miko scrambled to her feet, making sure to avoid stepping on her hurt leg.

"Kagome," cried Shippou, running to her. "Are you okay?"

The miko smiled. "Yeah, I'll be fine. Shippou I need to get to Inuyasha, can you find me some stick?"

"I can transform into a balloon andâ€""

"No," the miko said, cutting him in a firm voice. "Miroku was right, Inuyasha is unpredictable. I don't want to endanger you."

"Butâ€""

"No. Instead make sure you and Nero are close just in case I need you, okay?" Shippou nodded, and Kagome urged him to bring her some crutch. Meanwhile, her attention turned to her hanyou friend, who was busy with blocking Miroku's petrifying sutras.

"Inuyasha," the monk said, his tone stern, "you need to calm down."

The boy growled. "Don't but into it monk. You're not the one I want to fight with."

As if to answer it, a rock hit Inuyasha's head. Annoyed beyond measure the boy turned around to glare at his brother.

Sesshoumaru smirked. "Come Inuyasha, prove me how low did you fall hanyou."

The boy didn't need another invitation, focusing his whole attention on his half brother. A second later, first sword's clashes erupted on the clearing.

"You stole Kagome from me! I'll never forgive you bastard!" the boy yelled, swinging his sword and bringing it down hoping to cut the daiyoukai in half. The older male didn't seem concerned, pairing the blow with ease.

"Foolish. I have no use for human wench, especially yours hanyou."

"You're lying! You took her because you can't have Tetsusaiga! You can't stand the thought of it! That's why you stole Kagome!"

Sesshoumaru snorted. "If I wanted that wench, I wouldn't have to

steal her. She would come to me on her own."

All eyes swung in her direction while Kagome chocked at the comment. Those two were so much alike! They treated her like a thing, without her own mind. Blushing from both embarrassment and anger, she yelled. "I can hear you, and I'm not a thing!" But as always both brothers ignored her, busy with their fight. Pushing her fury behind, she waited for Shippou to come back.

At the same time, Inuyasha felt strange nausea building in his stomach. Sesshoumaru's words only fueled his already burning anger. Wasn't it what Naraku's minion told him earlier? That Kagome came to Sesshoumaru on her own once he left the camp? That she betrayed him on the first occasion?

Tetsusaiga seemed to burn his hand, and he could feel first drops of blood sliding down his hands, but he was too blinded by his fury to think about it. Even the voice at the back of his mind screaming that Kagome never would betray his trust didn't manage to calm him, as it did few hours before.

However, Sesshoumaru felt something, for he sneered right into his brother's face. "Allowing Naraku to possess you, little brother? I never thought you can fall so low."

The people watching them gasped.

"Shut up!" replied Inuyasha sending another Wind Scars in Sesshoumaru's direction. He had to kill Sesshoumaru. He had to kill him. He had to! Rest of his sense was lost to the point when he missed the scent of his most hated enemy.

Kagome, however did not. She turned around, catching Sango's and Miroku's attention. "I-It's Naraku!"

"Ah ku ku ku Kagome, thank you for announcing my arrival," said Naraku materializing out of nowhere, looking form the fighting brothers to the rest of the Shikon hunters, and back to Kagome. "Now, since our Inuyasha is so busy, I think you might consider giving me the Shikon shards that hang around your neck."

The young priestess glared at him, her hand fisting around her necklace. "Keep dreaming. I'll rather die."

Miroku and Sango moved to their friend's side, ready to fight.

Naraku chuckled. "Now that can be arranged. For all of you." His tentacles shot from behind his back, aiming for the trio. Miroku and Sango moved to the fight, yelling to Kagome to leave everything to them. The miko pouted a bit, but did as they said staying away knowing that limping priestess would be of little help. A moment later Shippou and Nero joined her, carrying her stick.

The fox looked up at her, and Kagome could see the question shining in his emerald eyes.

The miko nodded. "We are going. Inuyasha is on our heads now."

Shippou was about to answer, when he was interrupted by Sango's warning shout. "Kagome!"

The girl looked up just in time to see another tentacle only meters away, heading to her in frightening speed. Shippou screamed, hiding behind Kagome leg while the priestess closed her eyes bringing her hands up in a weak hope for protection. However, it turned out to be enough, when the pink sphere that formed around the trio destroyed the upcoming tentacle.

Kagome blinked, Shippou stared, Nero growled.

Naraku sputtered, his expression betrayed he had problems with believing his eyes. "A barrier?" he said.

Kagome couldn't resist the urge to stick her tongue at him. "You don't own patent on that!"

Naraku blinked in confusion, and Sango used his lapse to throw Hiraikotsu at his back, cutting several tentacles. The evil hanyou once again focused on the attacking people, instead of a miko.

Knowing she had to do something, instead of staring at the fighters, Kagome called her powers back. "Lets go," she said, walking as quick as she could in the direction of the fighting brothers. Shippou and Nero followed her in a safe distance.

"Inuyasha!" called Kagome when she was close enough. Inuyasha didn't bother with sparing her a single glance.

The girl fumed. "Inuyasha listen to me, or I'll say it."

Sesshoumaru glared at her. "Miko."

Seeing that fleeting glance Inuyasha roared. "Your fight is with me Sesshoumaru!"

The older brother rolled his eyes, before moving away from Inuyasha's attack, and sheathing his sword, punched the boy into the jaw, knocking him unconscious. "Don't bother me you fool."

Kagome winced, looking at hanyou's body plastered on the ground.

Sesshoumaru landed next to her, looking at the hanyou with boredom. "Miko, fix him," he demanded.

The girl blinked, before nodding. "I will try."

"Hnn." Without bothering with another word, or look Sesshoumaru left the pair. Kagome looked after him for a few seconds before she heard a groan coming from Inuyasha-shaped crater, and did her best to prepare herself for what was about to come.

Red eyes looked up at her, and her breath was caught in her throat. "Inuyashaâ€" "

A clawed hand caught her throat, squeezing. "You let him escape. You did betray me."

"Inuyasha, please, Sesshoumaru only cares about the dragon. I mean nothing."

"You're lying! You want to protect that bastard!"

Kagome gasped feeling tips of his claws pricking the skin on her neck. "Inuyasha Naraku is your enemy, not your brother!"

"Liar! You just told him to go ahead and wait for you while you try to feed me with your lies! But you now what? I won't let him steal you."

In that moment, Kagome understood Inuyasha wasn't possessed as Sesshoumaru said, but without a doubt there was something wrong with him. It was as if he lived in an illusion. 'No,' she scolded herself, 'he sees illusion! He feels it, hears it. Somehow, Naraku used his doubts and made them look real for him. But how? Can I reach him through that haze?'

The desperate need of air, brought her out of her thoughts and with the last bit of power Kagome looked into Inuyasha's eyes and whispered one word. "Kikyou."

Inuyasha gasped, his hold on her neck loosened a bit. "What?"

Kagome bit her lip, looking to the side where Miroku, Sango and Sesshoumaru were fighting against Naraku and other youkai he must have summoned at some point. They were doing well, but if Inuyasha got out of hand, they would have to fight on two fronts. She couldn't let that happen.

"Inuyasha," she rasped, "once upon a time Naraku made you turn against Kikyou. He's trying to do the same trick to make you hate me. Please, for Kikyou trust me one more time and believe it's all Naraku's plan."

The boy seemed conflicted. His hand clenched and unclenched on her throat, every time digging a little deeper into her skin. Kagome could feel thin lines of blood sliding down her skin before reaching her blouse. She knew that if Inuyasha's claws dig a little deeper he will kill her. Tears fell down her cheeks.

"Inuyasha, don't let the man who killed the only woman you loved control you."

"Naraku."

She was cut out of air once again. Her vision swirled , and the blackness started to creep in. "Fight! Inuyasha, fight for Kikyou!" she yelled before her world turned black. With a groan, the silver-haired boy released her, and she fell on the ground, gasping and coughing for so much needed oxygen.

When she was conscious, she looked to the side and saw Inuyasha fighting with Naraku with all his might. Even through the distance, she could see his eyes were golden once again. The girl sighed with relief and after taking few more breaths stood up.

The wound on her neck was burning as if it was on fire, but Kagome

ignored it. She couldn't show weakness now, when they were in the middle of the battle. Just as she was going to stand up and search for her bow Naraku laughed and disappeared in the cloud of toxic cloud.

The girl blinked before leaning on the ground. She didn't feel like fighting anyway. But when she was about to give a sigh of relief she heard a roar that she recognized as Inuyasha's. When she looked back, her friend was once again attacking Sesshoumaru, his eyes in red color.

"That's it! Inuyasha sit, sit, sit, sit, sit, sit!"

The boy hit the ground cursing everyone and everything with her name being mentioned the most. Kagome stood up, limping to the place he laid, calling Shippou on her way.

"Yes?" the boy asked, jumping on her shoulder. "Kagome you're bleeding!"

The miko covered her wounds with her hand. "It's nothing. Can you put on Inuyasha one of your statues? You know so he wouldn't move for some time."

"No problem!" the boy jumped down pulling a little figurine from his sleeve. "Fox fire!" he called with glee dropping the statue on Inuyasha's still form.

"Now, can anyone tell me what can cause Inuyasha to see only illusions?"

The group looked at her with lost expressions.

"Hnn. His scent is covered with Naraku's," Sesshoumaru said with a shrug.

Shippou leaned closer to his hanyou's friend sniffing it closer. "It's all over him, but not on him. Isn't that crazy?"

Kagome looked at her hand. "Not at all! Shippou that's all I needed!" Frowning Kagome put her hands on Inuyasha's clothes and let her purifying powers flow over his body.

The boy struggled, growling some indistinct profanities, but she didn't care. However, after a moment, his struggles stopped, and he yelled "Kagome stop! You will turn me into human stupid wench!"

Kagome sighed. "Thank you would be more suited at this moment. I think you can release him Shippou."

"What a pity," the boy murmured, doing as she said.

Kagome giggled, looking how Inuyasha pulled himself off the ground. Shippou looked back at her. "What did you do Kagome?"

"Yeah, good question wench. Why did you try to kill me?"

"Well, I didn't notice that earlier, but Inuyasha was covered in that strange dust. I don't know how but I suspected it was what caused him

to believe the illusion he saw was true."

Inuyasha blinked. "What illusion?"

Miroku stroked his chin, looking at the confused hanyou. "Inuyasha are you able to tell me what were you doing for the last few hours?"

"Sure I can, I was in the forest killed some latest Naraku's minion then came here, and that wench tried to purify me for no reason!"

Miroku nodded. "I see, you don't remember anything. Interesting."

Kagome sighed, shaking her head. "Miroku would you be so kind to fill him in?"

The monk nodded, ignoring his silver-haired friend. "Of course, Kagome. No need to worry."

"Good. Now if you excuse me I need to take care of my neck."

Inuyasha blinked. "What?"

The girl sighed and with Sango's help walked away, leaving the rest of the group on their own.

"What the hell is going on?" asked Inuyasha turning to the monk.

In reply, Miroku's staff hit him on the head. "What the hell?"

"I can't believe you could be so easy to manipulate Inuyasha. You should have known better."

"What? What was that for?"

"Think Inuyasha. You killed Naraku's minion and came here, and then you tried to kill Kagome and Sesshoumaru. Use that head of yours, and remember."

Inuyasha frowned, but then closed his eyes for a long time. When he opened them, his eyes were wide. "That bastard! He used me! Hell, I should have killed him! Keh! He's lucky that nothing serious happened. If he thought I would kill Kagome, he made a mistake of the day."

The staff hit his head once again. "No, Inuyasha," Miroku said, shaking his head, "Naraku's plan was never to make you kill Kagome. It was to destroy the trust between you and Kagome, and from the look of that I can tell he succeeded."

When Inuyasha looked up and saw the miko's tearful blue eyes, the red, bloodied marks around her neck, he started to think Miroku might have been right.

End
file.